Magpies and Mirrors: Identity as a mediator

of music preferences across the lifespan.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the role of identity on the development and trajectory of music preferences across the lifespan. The focus of interest in recent empirical research has been to predict music preferences using adolescent individual differences. It is widely recognized that adolescents use music to help them deal with a number of psychosocial and emotional challenges, which often arise during this critical period of identity development. There has been little study whether adults similarly use music to deal with a variety of lifespan experiences, and the impact that these have on the trajectory of music preferences. Therefore, I present the results of two studies which explored the relationship between identity and the trajectory of music preferences. The aim of the first on-line quantitative study was to replicate and expand previous research to explore through simple regression analyses, the relationship between personality traits, age, and estimated IQ and identity dimensions as predictors of music preferences. A large sample (n=768), ages ranging from 17-66 completed the survey. Music preference ratings were assessed using STOMP-R. The BFI and the EIPQ were used for personality trait and identity dimension measurement respectively. Results largely supported previous research. Interestingly, adjusted R^2 scores suggested that individual differences accounted for less than 20% of variance in music preferences. To obtain a broader perspective of the problem, a second qualitative study (n=62, 18-73 years; X=28.6), was performed using semi-structured interviews to explore through a symbolic interactionist lens the development and evolution of music preferences as symbolic representations of identity. Coding and thematic analysis of the data revealed that the trajectory, meaning and function of music preferences are indeed subject to evolution, largely mediated by identity development, lifespan experiences and changing social groups. Interestingly, an increasing number of older adults had used the internet and media websites to revisit music from their past and expand their musical taste palate. Future research may explore the use of technology by older adults, on the trajectory of music preferences.

Key Words: Music Preferences, Age, Identity, Symbolic Interactionism.

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This thesis is dedicated to my supervisor, Dr Alan Marsden for his unwavering support, advice and just being there. I will be eternally grateful. In a rather strange way, I will miss the killer 'Columbo' question, posed at the end of each supervision session. Invariably, this final question was the one question I had not anticipated, but it was never in vain.

I also owe a huge debt of gratitude to the many people who kindly gave me their time and their trust in me to answer my call for participants for the two studies. I sincerely hope that in return for your trust in me, I have given justice to your accounts and treated them with the utmost respect for the kindness you gave me.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

'My argument here, in short, rests on two premises: first, that identity is a *mobile*, a process not a thing, a becoming not a being; second, that our experience of music-of music making and music listening- is best understood as an experience of this *self-in-process'*, [italics in original] (Frith, 1996: 109).

1.1 A circumspection of music preferences, identity and age

The relationship between music and identity appears to be a well-established union within music psychology research, but what exactly do the terms identity or self mean to the reader? Are there fundamental epistemological and methodological differences between these terms; and if so where does identity finish and the self start? The most honest answer to these questions is that it is likely that no single simple overarching definition of identity (including the self) could ever exist to the satisfaction of all (Erikson, 1968; Michael, 1996; Vignoles, Schwartz & Luyckx, 2012). However, if there are significant differences between these terms, then this raises serious concerns how the relationship between music and identity is understood.

In light of the broad array of definitions of identity, my own epistemological position was drawn from the oeuvres of Erik Erikson (1902-1994) and the American pragmatist and social psychologist George Herbert Mead (1863-1931). Both Erikson and Mead believed in an unfolding sense of identity which adapted or evolved in response to a number of physiological, psychological and social processes. In short, the self is not a static phenomenon but is always in-process (Frith, 1996, Jackson, 2010). Mead's theories on the development and evolutionary of an emergent self across the lifespan and the evolutionary meaning of significant objects through social interaction clearly hold particular resonance for this thesis. It is argued that music preferences as symbolic objects representative of identity, or to put it another way, as extensions of the self (Ahuvia 2005; Belk, 1988; Cohen, 1989; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Tian & Belk, 2005), are shaped by identity development, maturation and shifting social contexts. Furthermore, in line with Mead's (1934) theories on the emergent self, it is also

argued that individuals are largely proactive in shaping their music preferences. Evidence of proactive agency may be manifested by seeking out new music styles, disengagement with some music styles, or a reduction or expansion of music listening hours; or indeed a shift in the function of the music in light of an evolved identity saliency. It is also worth noting that technological advances over the last twenty years have had a significant impact on the music consumption practices of individuals of all ages. And so through the multiple varieties and interconnectivity of technological devices, individuals have an inordinate number of opportunities to explore and renegotiate their music preferences in line with their own sense of identity saliency.

Thus the aim of this thesis will be to examine and explore the relationship between music preferences and identity through a mixed methodological perspective. The first quantitative study re-examined the relationship between music preferences and individual differences, but extended to include Erikson's (1968) identity dimensions of Commitment and Exploration and across a broader age range of participants. It is important to note that according to Erikson, identity development was not a solely pertinent to adolescence but developed across the lifespan in response to a number of psychological, biological and social challenges. In addition to Erikson's notion of an unfolding and evolving identity and Mead's notion of an emergent self; Frith's (1996) astute observation that the self is 'in-process' formed the theoretical bedrock to this thesis. But if this is my epistemological position then a number of questions need to be addressed. For example, if identity is in a state of flux or evolution, then what impact does this have on the relationship between music and identity across the lifespan? If individuals are committed to a particular genre of music in adolescence, does this hold true across throughout adulthood? Conversely, are adults more open than adolescents to accept and explore previously rejected music styles? And if so why? What are the psychological and social processes which lay claim to shifts in the music palate? In response to these and other important questions raised by the first study, I performed a qualitative study develop a broader perspective of the development and evolution of

trajectory of music preferences across the lifespan. However, in light of theoretical, epistemological and methodological reasons it was deemed crucial to dovetail this second study with the earlier results of the first study. In effect, rather than position this second qualitative study with different methodological and theoretical considerations in stark juxtaposition with first study; it was considered more appropriate re-examine the results of the first study, recognize the important findings and on the basis of these results reposition my academic enquiry to develop a broad perspective incorporating the findings from both studies. The aim of this broad perspective would be to create an in-depth theoretical understanding of the unfolding relationship between music preferences and identity across the lifespan, in light of the many personal and social challenges that each of us face on a daily basis on the evolution and trajectory of music preferences.

The literature search and results of the first study informed and shaped the questions for the semi-structured interviews for the qualitative study. I explored through semi-structured interviews retrospective reflections of individuals' accounts of their own sense of identity development from early adolescence to the present day. In addition, I discussed the importance of race, gender, social groups had had on their own sense of identity; and in turn the influence that these biological and social determinants had made on the trajectory of their music preferences. Although there was strong evidence from both studies to suggest that individuals of all ages are willing to (re)examine their current palate and (re)commit themselves to a favourite artist(s) and for some to explore new music preferences; it was clear that no single variable or determinant was solely responsible for the shift. In reality this is no surprise. Hargreaves (1986) has offered sage advice against trying to provide an explanation of the differences and effect of the different biological or social determinant variable on music preferences as they cannot be separated cleanly from the others, they are not mutually exclusive.   Maturation, changing social contexts and a broad range of expected and unexpected lifespan experiences all had a significant impact on the trajectory of music preferences. It was also interesting to note in the qualitative study that

for some middle aged and older aged adults, an increased confidence in the engagement of technology alongside social and media websites, had led to a re-examination of their established music palate and for some an evolutionary shift in the relationship between their music and their own sense of identity.

1.2 Age

Yet at this juncture it is important to draw attention to one important issue related to identity development which holds particular significance for this thesis and that is the impact that the malleable relationship between age and the individual's sense of identity. As noted earlier both Erikson and Mead, albeit from slightly different perspectives, advocated the notion that identity development was not just pertinent to adolescence but developed across the lifespan. However, it also abundantly clear that there is an imbalance on the amount of empirical research on music preferences with the lion's share of interest focused on adolescent music tastes, largely because adolescents are considered to be the largest consumers of music. It is quite clear that adolescence is a critical period for the development and establishment of music preferences (Hargreaves, 1986; Lamont & Webb, 2010). One of primary reasons for this high level of consumption and commitment to music is to a large extent because music acts as a fundamental tool or conduit to aid in the negotiation and renegotiation of their own sense of personal and social identity in response to broad range of psychological and social issues that often arise during this often difficult and critical period of identity development (Arnett, 1995; Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Bleich, Zillmann & Weaver, 1991; Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013; Frith, 1983; Giles *et al*, 2009; Hargreaves, 1986; Mark, 1998; North & Hargreaves, 1999, 2007a; North, Hargreaves & O'Neill, 2000; Lamont & Webb, 2010; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006, 2007; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2010; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002; Tekman & Hortesçu, 2002; Zillmann & Gan, 1997). It is also noted that adolescents' fascination with music is not just confined to music consumption alone. For the vast majority of adolescents, talking about it remains more important to them than talking about books, films, television or sport (Fitzgerald, 1995; Rentfrow & Gosling (2003, 2006; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Zillmann & Gan, 1997). It has also been noted that adolescents often engage in cognitive

behaviour closely associated with music. For example, adolescents frequently use music to establish and project a particular salient identity and set of values that is important to them as part of their own personal identity development and their own sense of social identity (Arnett 1995; Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; Krause & Hargreaves, 2012; North & Hargreaves, 2007a, 2007 b, 2007c). This identity may be related to a desire to appear tough, aggressive, reckless, intellectual, misunderstood, and geeky. Alternatively their identity saliency may related to a particular set of socio-political values which are often associated with an artist or genre of music, such as vegetarianism, anti-abortion rights, or a vehement stance against military action. In short, this aural and visual badge of identity affirms who they are and how they would like to be seen by others in their social groups (Frith, 1983; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; Greasley *et al*, 2013; Hansen & Hansen, 1991; Lamont & Webb, 2010; North & Hargreaves, 1999, 2002; North, Hargreaves, O'Neill, 2002; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006, 2007; Rentfrow, Goldberg & Levitin, 2011; Rentfrow *et al*, 2012; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2010; Tekman & Hortesçu, 2002). Yet compared to adolescent music preferences, it would appear that there is a marked paucity of research on music preferences beyond adolescence.

LeBlanc (1982: 37) drew attention to the importance of age and the complexities of adult daily lives on the trajectory of music preferences, 'The maturation variable is difficult to separate from the influence of the cultural environment variables […] socioeconomic status and memories'. Yet despite his observation noted over thirty years ago, research on adult music preferences is still vastly under-represented in the literature. The reasons for this lacuna on research on music preferences beyond adolescence may be partially explained by the handful of studies to have explored age related differences. For example, it has been suggested that the trajectory of music preferences plateaus from young adulthood onwards, leading to a crystallization and stasis of music preferences from this point onwards (Delsing *et al,* 2008; Hargreaves & North, 1997b; Holbrook & Schindler, 1989; Mulder *et al*, 2008; North & Hargreaves, 1995, 2002). The argument for a crystallization of music preferences in early adulthood appears to stem

from studies which have reliably shown that individuals rate music preferences formed within this critical period higher than other music preferences established at any other period of their lives (Krumhansl & Zupnik, 2013; Lamont & Webb, 2010; North & Hargreaves, 2008). It has also been suggested that in adulthood there is a marked reduction in time dedicated to music and as a consequence it is deemed to be less important (Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2010; Harrison & Ryan, 2009; LeBlanc, 1991; LeBlanc *et al*, 1996; Lonsdale & North, 2011; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009, 2010). One of the primary aims of this thesis is to explore in close detail the two notions of music preferences stasis and the apparent reduction in importance of music in adulthood. It is accepted that due to life commitments of work and family, a reduction in music consumption may be true, but the notion that music is less important in adulthood is to be challenged.

In light of identity development which incorporates lifespan experiences, maturation, changing social friendship groups and a broadening of cultural experiences; it is suggested that music is perhaps a less overt 'badge' to one's identity in relation to social group affiliation and delineation. But arguably, it is no less important to help adults deal with the complexities of daily life (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013; DeNora, 2000; Greasley *et al*, 2013; Hays & Minichiello, 1995; Harrison & Ryan, 2009; Laukka, 2007). As Harrison & Ryan recognize (p.650):

With the exception of studies of youth culture, the literature has largely ignored the influence of life-course stage and age on cultural taste. Yet lifecourse should be important given that tastes are influenced by family socialisation, social networks, education, the media and social roles. Moreover, like consumption practices in general, tastes are likely to change over a lifetime. […] The taste acquisitions and consumptive practices of a teenager trying to fit into a particular high-school clique or suburban scene are likely to be quite different in character and intent from the consumptive practices and tastes of a middle-aged adult whose concerns may be more variously attuned to work, parenting, church, community and other interests and associations.

In short, it would seem reasonable to assume that just as adolescents use music to deal with a broad range of psychosocial and emotional issues, so too do adults but perhaps for different reasons. Adults are more likely than adolescents to have had significant personal relationships, exposure to wider cultural stimuli and broader social contexts. Thus the function of the music may be for nostalgia, to evoke past identities, events and relationships or as a de-stressor of adult daily life (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013; DeNora, 2000; Greasley *et al*, 2013; Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Kroger & Adair, 2008; Laukka, 2007; Shankar *et al*, 2009). In a qualitative study on the role and function of music in an elderly population, Hays and Minichiello (2005) noted that music was considered far from being unimportant, but continued to act as a crucial conduit to evoke memories, as well as for emotional and spiritual well-being. Kroger and Adair (2008) also drew attention to the strong sense of nostalgia embedded within deep personal memories and profound sense of loss when personal objects such as music albums were irretrievably lost in a fire. These objects were considered to be an inherent aspect of their identity, an extension of their selves and their role within the family (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1998; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochburg-Halton 1981). Thus it would appear that beyond adolescence, there is a renegotiation of the relationship between music and identity but how this is manifested on the function and meaning of music preferences across the lifespan, is so far largely unexplained.

1.3 Age related changes

There is evidence to suggest that age does have an impact on the trajectory of music preferences, the style of music that individuals like and how receptive they are to different styles (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013; Chamorro-Premuzic *et al,* 2009; Hargreaves, 1986; Hargreaves & North, 1997b; Harrison & Ryan, 2009; LeBlanc, 1982, 1991; LeBlanc *et al*, 1996; Russell, 1997; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2010). For example, LeBlanc's (1991) model that proposed the notion that music tastes vary across the lifespan, was based upon Hargreaves' (1982) notion that adolescents are more 'open-eared' than adults. LeBlanc (1991: 2) proposed a four stage model which denoted that: '(a) younger children are more open eared, (b) open-earedness declines as the child enters adolescence, (c) there is a partial rebound of open-

earedness as the listener matures from adolescence to young adulthood, and (d) open-earedness declines

as the listener matures to old age'. However these changes appear to be focused on age groups positioned

at either end of the life spectrum, adolescence and the elderly. In addition, as Bonneville-Roussy *et al*,

(2013) have identified closer examination of studies which have explored age and its impact on the

trajectory preferences are largely inconsistent and have focused on either popular music alone (Holbrook

& Schindler, 1989) or a narrow range of music genres, such as rock, pop, classical music and jazz

(Delsing *et al*, 2008; Hargreaves & North, 1997b; Le Blanc, 1991; LeBlanc *et al*, 2006; Mulder *et al*,

2008). Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, (2013) also draw attention to the lack of research on the trajectory of

music preferences of working age individuals. Numerous studies have shown the strong associations

between age and music genre. Perhaps unsurprisingly popular music was rated highest by younger

participants and complex music such as classical music and jazz was positively related to the older age

groups (Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2009; Hargreaves & North, 1997b; Harrison & Ryan, 2009; North &

Hargreaves, 2002, 2008; Russell, 1997). Yet it is clear that there is an obvious gap which lays between

young adulthood and old age which is under-represented in the literature. In addition, it is not clear how

preferences for other types of music genre vary across the lifespan. Neither is it clear whether there is

further development of music preferences in adulthood and the personal or social factors required to

trigger a shift in the trajectory or indeed any empirical evidence to support notions of stasis in middle

adulthood. Thus it is my intention within this thesis to address the impact of age on the trajectory and

development of music preferences across the whole lifespan.

1.4 Individual differences

An alternative approach to the relationship between music and identity has been to examine the

relationship between music and individual preferences such as personality traits (Chamorro-Premuzic &

Furnham, 2007; Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2009; Delsing *et al*; 2008; Dunn *et al*, 2012; Higdon &

Stephens, 2008; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Zweigenhaft, 2008) ; IQ and

educational status (Bryson, 1996; Snibbe & Markus, 2005; van Eijck, 2001); gender (Christenson &

Peterson, 1988; Johnson *et al*, 2007). Yet to the best of my knowledge, no study has examined the relationship between the trajectory of music preferences and identity developmental processes *per se*. I find this omission surprising given the important role that music plays in the daily lives of adolescents during this critical period of identity growth and formation. These assumptions and omissions are considered highly problematic on a number of levels and therefore each will be discussed in depth across the thesis. If I may be excused a brief sojourn into my own personal history, I will demonstrate why I consider these assumptions to be problematic through an account of the relationship between my own music preferences and my own identity development.

1.5 Personal history

A couple of summers ago, I had a rare moment of time to myself in the garden, listening to a complex piece on BBC Radio 3, contemplating a particularly recurring aspect of my developing thesis. This rumination concerned an argument proposed by a number of researchers that a liking for popular music crystallises at around 24 years of age and remains relatively stable across the lifespan (Delsing *et al,* 1998; Hargreaves & North, 1997b; Holbrook & Schindler, 1989: Mulder *et al*, 2008: North & Hargreaves, 1995, 2002). I was aware that this argument only centered around one particular genre and there was fairly strong evidence (as noted earlier) that proposed a counter argument, which suggested that music preferences do indeed shift and evolve in adulthood and old age. However at that stage I was unable to formulate a cogent argument, but it took a moment of self-reflection to understand why I disagreed.

My taste in music, clothes, my preferred selection of radio stations and types of radio programmes had all definitely evolved, yet paradoxically I still felt like the same me from my early twenties. Was the me now so very different from the me of my past? My physical and psychological attributes, possessions and lifespan experiences, which had contributed to construct my global sense of identity, had evolved over the years. Nature had had a cruel but over-riding say in some of my choices about my self-presentation and I had suddenly become acutely aware that I had aged; surely gardening and listening to BBC Radio 3

were activities which were only engaged by middle aged and elderly persons? I had adopted the practices and habits of a middle aged white male without being aware of their onset or existence. As I contemplated who I was and what I had achieved, it was also evident that not all aspects of my identity had changed, some had indeed remained static. My political views had shifted but I was probably more tolerant of differing opinions than I had been in early adulthood, but my views on religion or questions of an ultimate deity had remained fixed since late childhood. A successful career as a clinical nurse specialist in cardiology, resuscitation and critical emergency medicine had ceased, simply because I was not that individual any more, that was not how I saw myself anymore. The career race and desire to acquire the trappings of success no longer excited me. I had ceased to be that person anymore and my life had taken on a new direction to pursue a new academic career pathway in musicology, yet my own self-view of my current identity was that I was much happier now than before. Where had the me of yesterday gone? I didn't miss him but who was I now?

In addition, I knew that my own music preferences had changed. Listening to a challenging symphonic piece on BBC Radio 3 would never have been part of my music palate twenty years ago. So why was this music part of my palate now? I was aware that early adulthood is often associated with a re-examination and consolidation of one's current tastes (Lamont & Webb, 2010), and it may also be associated with a broadening of the boundaries (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013). But this shift appeared to go beyond a broadening of horizons to be almost unrecognizable from my early twenties. I was not aware of any significant shift or event which had caused my music taste palate to shift so far. I appeared to be experiencing a strange paradox. I felt that I was the same person inside, but there was no denying that I also felt completely different from my late teens and early twenties. In return, although I still engaged with a large part of music from my younger years, the level of the engagement had decreased. My taste for classical music had definitely broadened and I was no longer willing to accept a diet of mainstream 'safe' classical music. My musical taste palate had also opened up to consume other music styles which I

had previously rejected, styles such as jazz, obscure complex early electronic music and world music. I enjoyed the random pot-pourri approach to the radio show, *Late Junction* on BBC Radio 3 which plays an eclectic selection of world and other music rarely heard on mainstream radio. Stimulation was to be found in the rich variety of music offered, which threw together a breadth of different music styles and occasionally unfamiliar instrumentation. For example, one was just as likely to hear Tibetan Buddhist funeral music juxtaposed with a Sicilian peasant tarantella in 6/8 time or an early experimental electronic music from the 1950s, as a Schubert *Impromptu*. Questions of why, when and how clearly needed further exploration.

Cook's (1998) observation that listening to music is a statement to others 'of who you are' suddenly became the focus of my ruminations. My identity had for the most part evolved and my listening practices, the level of engagement with the music of my younger years had definitely changed. It was still of high personal status but it was no longer a daily rite of passage, a badge to confirm who I was to myself and my peers (Hargreaves, 1986; Hargreaves & North, 1999; North & Hargreaves, 2007a, 2007c; North, Hargreaves & O'Neill, 2000; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006, 2007; Tarrant & Hortesçu, 2002).

I explored some of these questions with friends and other parents at the school gates and work colleagues. They confirmed that to large extent they only ever engaged with their earlier adolescent music tastes to reminisce and remember past events and relationships (cf. De Nora, 2000; Shankar, 2000; Shankar *et al*, 2009) and that the function of their music had shifted across the lifespan. A few noted to me in private that they were unable to listen to certain songs or artists, because the music brought back many painful memories of a lost relationship, bereavement or a traumatic event. Some said that the reason for change in music taste could be explained by the fact that the music was 'just no longer who I am anymore'. One acquaintance commented that 'it's a bit daft for a 46 year old man to be doing the pogo to The Clash'. Others said that their own music palate had in fact opened up to liking

previously rejected music, and some had noted this shift in preference appeared to stem from constant exposure to their own teenage children's music. Expressions of preference which naturally had caused great embarrassment to the young individual concerned, especially when the adult began to sing along to the songs in front of their his or her peers.

Music consumption habits had also changed. Many commented that the advent of music streaming websites such as Spotify and Napster had allowed them to download their old tastes and accumulate new music in an instant, without the need to go to a specialist vinyl record shop and no longer did they have to accommodate boxes or shelves full of tape cassettes and vinyl records. For example, some noted that rather than have a limited collection of bulky CDs in the car, they could create playlists on MP-3 players and smart phones and have instant access to thousands of tracks. In effect, the music which had become symbolic of who they are now, who they once were and their values and beliefs (Cook, 1998; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; Hargreaves & North, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Rentfrow & Gosling 2003, 2006; Zweigenhaft, 2008) and could be transported easily and accessed at will (North & Hargreaves, 1999; Krause & Hargreaves, 2012; Shankar *et al*, 2009). However, it was also clear that for some, the act of engagement was also an important aspect of the musical experience. For example, the physical format of the music, vinyl and to a lesser degree the cassette, held equal status in importance as listening to the music itself. For these individuals the physical act of engagement with the object, such as to place the needle on the vinyl record, or examine the meaning of the artwork of the album cover and read the lyrical texts, were a necessary and crucial rite of passage which completed the listening experience. The downloading of music was an anathema to their music. The comments gleaned from my small social group appeared to suggest that music preference do indeed undergo a degree of evolution and shift in function and orientation, but whether their comments reveal a generalized and consistent pattern across the lifespan or just pertinent to this group of thirty to forty something individuals alone, was so far unexplained. Although it is fully accepted that the evidence produced so far is purely anecdotal, I believe

that my friends' and colleagues' replies supported my suspicion that music preferences are indeed subject to evolution across the lifespan.

1.6 Technological Advancements

Beyond issues related to identity development and social grouping, another reason why music preference may have shifted may also be explained by recent technological advancements. Compared to twenty years ago, music engagement practices have shifted significantly. The increased interconnectivity of multi-media devices such as smart phones, tablets, has provided individuals with greater opportunities to access an almost unlimited range of music styles in an instant that can be taken with ease to any other environment and one's convenience (Krause & Hargreaves, 2012). Recent data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) would suggest that technological engagement with the internet via multimedia devices by older individuals of retirement age or more has significantly increased over the last couple of years (ONS, 2013). As a consequence, they too have the same opportunities to download their music from their past, and seek out new and unfamiliar music styles as recommended by friends, family, radio stations and via social media websites. There is no hard evidence to support my belief that this increased confidence and usage of the internet will equate to an increased level of access to digitally formatted music but it is not unreasonable to suppose that it may hold true.

The possibilities and opportunities of the technological advancements were foreseen by Hargreaves and North (1999), when home internet access was in its infancy. Use of the internet in relation to daily activities such as purchasing goods, downloading music occurred to a significantly far lesser degree than today and of course it was impossible to access the internet using a mobile phone. The ubiquitous nature of on-line daily activities and interaction via the internet did not exist as we know it today. Hargreaves and North (1999: 72) recognize the future possibilities for music engagement when they envisaged the potential possibilities with the advent of the internet and the miniaturization of music playing devices (then largely limited to the MP-3 players and the Discman):

The first of these developments stems from the increasing access to and falling cost of networked personal computers. The potential effects of the internet on communication between individuals, groups and organizations will have a profound impact on the music broadcasting and publishing industries. We are already moving towards a situation in which vast libraries of digitally-stored musical data are available to anyone with an internet terminal; and although the copyright and security aspects of this remain to be worked out in detail, it does not seem too far-fetched to suggest that any music of any style or period might be readily available to any listener at anytime within the next decade or two. The issue for the consumer is likely to shift from "what is available?" to "what are the best strategies for searching a virtually infinite data bank, all of which is available?"

It is highly unlikely that Hargreaves and North truly envisaged the portability and interconnectivity of media devices to play download and share one's music preferences in an instant. Over the last twenty years, the relationship between one's music and how we engage with our music has undergone a significant cultural revolution, it remains as Frith (1996) and Cook (1998) have suggested, become a fundamental part of our identity of past and present identities.

For example, the advent of the internet and social and media websites has also created virtual communities and virtual identities that allow music preferences to be shared by total strangers. In essence, the context for the establishment and development of music preferences has shifted considerably. However, an important argument within this thesis is the proactive nature of individuals to shape their own trajectory of their music preferences. This argument is drawn from Mead's (1934) belief in humanism and evolutionary theories of the self. The notion of the proactive individual, who uses technology to maintain and manage their music preferences in light of identity saliency, forms a fundamental element of my argument that preferences evolve across the lifespan. In short, Mead argued that human individuals rely on memories to re-enact on past experiences in order to shape their own environment and suit their needs. As both author and recipient of these actions, individuals responded accordingly. Thus with music preferences individuals select the music or social contexts to enhance the physiological and psychological effects of the music, but all responses come from within the individual. Consequently, I totally reject any notion that large scale behaviour associated with music such illegal

drug taking (Chen *et al*, 2006), driving fast or reckless behaviour or criminal activity (Arnett, 1995, Bleich, Zillmann & Weaver, 1991; Tanner, Asbridge & Wortley, 2009; Zweigenhaft, 2008) is due to the music alone. In line with Mead's pragmatism and humanistic beliefs, action is inherent to the individual. To suggest otherwise is to over-exaggerate the effects of music and denigrate the actions of human agency (Hesmondhalgh, 2008). Over the course of this thesis, I will argue that music is not a drug that compels individuals to act beyond their control but it is an adjunct to our identity. Thus it is argued that any action is inherent within the individual alone. Undoubtedly music enhances the personal and social experiences and it broadly establishes the individual's values and expected cognitive behaviour to the wider social group (Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; Krause & Hargreaves, 2012; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006, 2007; Rentfrow, Gosling & Oldmeadow, 2009); but it is an adjunct, a representation of values and identity, not a drug.

1.7 Shifting definitions of identity

Before I introduce an overview of this thesis, I recognize that in reference to identity, I have switched seamlessly between *identity* and *self* as if they were interchangeable. The difficulty here is that there is no single answer; naturally it depends on one's epistemological and methodological position. For some researchers (Côté & Levine, 2002) these terms are separate issues but for others (Schwartz, 2006; Thornton, 2008; Vignoles, 2012; Vignoles, Schwartz & Luyckx, 2012), they are interchangeable. And so if there is no 'bright white line' (Yannow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006) dividing identity and the self then interpretations on the terms of reference may become muddied. Identity appears to be like a complex art object, encircled by a number of different art critics each with their own agenda, specific audience readership, self-image and language (Côté and Levine, 2002; Thornton, 2008; Vignoles, 2012; Vignoles, Schwartz & Luyckx, 2012). Each critic is trying to convince the others that his or her perspective clearly provides the answers to see and understand the meaning of the object with absolute clarity. However, the underlying problem is that not all the critics are conversant in the same language as the others. In effect, their analyses and interpretations of identity are not purely based upon their own perspective of

the object, but naturally this perspective is subject to bias and consequently the foci of the different interpretations will not be consistent across the room.

To elaborate this issue, if I may return to focus on the image of my brief period of tranquility in the garden, it is highly probable that my own self-views of how I saw myself in the garden differed greatly from the views of others; subject to their own identity development, sociological determinants such as age, gender, race, social class and their own cultural background. To those much younger than me, I was probably just another faceless boring middle aged white male listening to 'dead man's music' on BBC Radio 3. It is also possible that other individuals may make a series of judgements about my identity and my lifestyle choices or political views based purely upon my choice of radio station and its output. For example, it may be assumed that I might enjoy taking part in other highbrow activities such as going to the theatre or challenging dance productions or art galleries, read complex intellectual books, watch intellectually stimulating and thought provoking television. In turn, it may be assumed that I would shun or avoid lowbrow activities and associated media such as certain television stations, popular reality television programmes, soaps, or read the red top newspapers (Bourdieu, 1984; Hargreaves & North, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006, 2007, van Eijck, 2001). Other factors such as my political allegiance[1], my income, my religious views, my views on taxation, my attitude towards recycling household waste and my marital status may also be assumed from my music listening habits

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[1] A liking for classical music has been associated with the mainstream right-wing party in the UK, the Conservative party. In a series of three papers, North and Hargreaves (2007a; 2007b; 2007c) highlighted the variety and breadth of lifestyle choices that are associated with an individual's music preferences. Interestingly, in both the Rentfrow & Gosling's (2003) paper and the Zweigenhaft (2008) paper, individuals who expressed a liking for classical music which falls into the Reflective and Complex dimension were considered to be liberal and more open minded than those who liked country, religious and pop music. Fans of these music genres adhere to a more conservative, traditional lifestyle. This apparent contradiction may be a reflection of the differences between the UK and the US sociopolitical and ideological systems. Although any discussion on these differences lies beyond the scope of this thesis, it does raise an interesting and pertinent point about the geographical and sociopolitical differences that lie behind music and identity. Yet questions of interpretation and sociopolitical differences in relation to music genres become particularly relevant later on in the thesis, when I explore and compare the differences between my first qualitative study and the Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008) papers.
In reality, few of these values, beliefs and lifestyle choices highlighted by North and Hargreaves apply to me. Future research may re-examine the relationship between these lifestyle choices and the association with music preferences.

(North & Hargreaves, 2007a, Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006, Rentfrow, McDonald & Oldmeadow, 2009).

It holds true that my identity may also have been judged on aspects or objects of my identity which are not physically inherent but exist extra-corporeally to me, such as my choice of clothes, my watch, my house or the car outside my house, surrounding neighbourhood (Dittmar, 1992; Dittmar, 2012). Others may have judged my identity on my race or my physical characteristics such as my height in relation to the average of my gender. There are of course many more factors in relation to my identity which may be gleaned from my choice of music, but the subject of identity is so vast that it would be futile to try and cover all aspects here. What is important however is to note that any assumption is not confined to one aspect, but any judgment is based upon a combination of these various choices and attributes. The issue here is that identity is a concept that that has many avenues and definitions which are constructed, negotiated, interpreted and manipulated according to one's own identity, intellectual perspective, self-views and social contexts.

It is important to note that within identity research, the terminology, epistemological questions and methodological approaches are so varied that is not an understatement to suggest that one could be forgiven for thinking that identity researchers are talking about completely separate subjects of academic enquiry. In light of the breadth of academic disciplines which are concerned with questions of identity, identity development, social identity, sexual identity, gender identity, national identity, and racial identity to name but a few, this ambiguity is perhaps not surprising. In addition, the task of choosing the most appropriate tool or approach in identity research is not helped by the cross-infiltration of terminology whereby researchers across the field use the same words but they hold different meanings, such as ego-identity, self, identity and self-identity (Thornton, 2008). Herein lies the problem. If identity researchers approach questions of identity from a variety of different epistemological and methodological positions, then this raises serious questions on how the relationship between music

preferences and identity is understood. In light of the multiple interpretations of identity, I will provide a brief exploration of the two approaches to identity and self but in my opinion these are not diametrically opposing views but different perspectives of identity. Even though I will use the term identity in relation to Erikson's theories and self for Mead, I make no differentiation and view identity to exist at a broader level, rather than defined and constrained by lexical argument. Although I may discuss the differences between the two approaches, I am happy to accommodate both as two sides of the same coin (cf. Vignoles, 2012).

1.8 Music, identity and social forces

Although it is clear that music preferences are implicit in the development of adolescent identity, no study has quantifiably measured identity *per se* and its relationship to music preferences. Given the importance that music plays in the daily lives of adolescents to help them construct their identity (Crozier, 1997; Greasley *et al*, 2013; Hargreaves, Miell & Macdonald, 2002), the omission of Erikson's theories is considered surprising. This thesis will address this apparent shortcoming and Erikson's theories will in due course be explored in greater detail.

An alternative approach to music and identity has been to examine the important role that values and beliefs associated with adolescent social groups have had on the development and trajectory of music preferences. These arguments are largely based within Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and are mainly concerned with the importance of music and its role in social group affiliation and delineation, in relation to self-esteem issues in the daily lives of adolescents (Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; North, Hargreaves & O'Neill, 2000; Tarrant, North & Hargeaves, 2002; Tekman & Hortesçu, 2002). The high importance that adolescents give to social group affiliation is not underestimated, but it is not clear whether the importance of social groups and the socially constructed rules which are highly relevant within adolescent social communities apply to adults in the same manner and the impact on the development and trajectory of music preferences (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013).

1.9 Disequilibrating events

Although the social affiliation and delineation associations through music are perhaps less pertinent to adults, they arguably have more complex social groups associated with friendship, employment, relationship, family, university and groups associated around lifestyle choices (religion, values, activity groups, business groups etc.). If individuals do indeed (re) examine and (re)commitment their music preferences in adulthood (Lamont & Webb, 2010), then this may be due to either natural fluctuations of commitment and exploration within identity development and maturation (Stephen *et al*, 1992; Meeus, Iedema & Maassen (2002), the effects of social group forces or perhaps an interplay between the two. Erikson (1968) argued that that significant unexpected or negative lifespan experiences, labelled as disequilibrating events, are more likely to occur in adulthood and are likely to have a profound impact on self-views of identity. Disequilibrating events may mean the loss or break-up of a personal relationship including loss of social and friendship groups, or having to move house with its own set of challenges as a result of divorce, bankruptcy, unemployment or significant ill-health. These are significant factors which threaten one's sense of identity and wellbeing (Breakwell, 1988; Erikson, 1968). These events are likely to have a significant impact on the whole identity, psychological, physiological and social identity and are rarely specific to one aspect of one's identity. Although Giddens (1991:12) recognized the interconnections between personal and social identity noted, he questions whether an individual's attempts to rectify their identity is ever truly successful to maintain equilibrium:

Personal problems, personal trials and crises, personal relationships; what can these tell us, and what do they express, about the social landscape of modernity? […] yet people carry on their personal lives much as they always did, coping as best they can with the social transformations around them. Or do they? For social circumstances are not separate from personal life, nor are they just an external environment to them. In struggling with intimate problems, individuals help actively to reconstruct the universe of social activity around them.

A shared sense of community, of shared identity, values, and beliefs through music is widely accepted to be an extremely useful way to address threatened or challenged identities (Mark, 1998; Martin, 1995). Arnett (1995) noted that a sense of community of shared liking for a genre of music or particular artist(s) was extremely important to adolescents. In effect, they enjoyed the sense that there were other individuals just like them, whom they would never meet, but the idea that others shared the same values was extremely important. Today the overall landscape of communication and sharing of music is very different from the pre-internet days that Arnett discussed. The interconnectivity and portability of multimedia devices allow immediate sharing of music tastes. Without doubt the onset of global digital communities plays an important role on the trajectory of music preferences. Individuals can share and recommend their preferences with a multitude of strangers via numerous media and social websites simultaneously thus sharing their preferences, identity and values to an almost infinite number of people. In addition, the vast majority of radio stations or music streaming websites have a link of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter or You Tube. Individuals are thus able to share their memories and personal music autobiographies to total strangers who may share a particular temporal, cultural or geographical history. Consequently declaration and projection of one's music preferences are perhaps less visual that can be traced directly to that individual because he or she is now able to create a virtual identity hidden by pseudonym and a false image. In short, Cook's (1998) prophetic words ring truer than ever before, not only is music who we are but who we want to be. The 'past and memories' revealed in relation to one's music may in fact bear little resemblance to the actual, or even provisional truth (Mead, 1929 / 1964)[2]. Identities and pasts may be created and presented with few checks to their veracity.

It is widely recognized within academic and non-academic literature alike, the ubiquitous but immensely powerful union between music and personal relationships. Although music is used by adolescents and

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[2] Mead argued that there was no such thing as the truth, only provisional truths. He also argued that the past is never actually a true past, an immovable retrospective concept. The past he argued is always written and understood as the present and so is actually the present 'represented' as the past when in fact it is the present.

adults to alike as a marker of a relationship, convey emotions and feelings to the other and to share common values; it is also widely used to remember lost relationships and evoke past identities even though this act may itself strong negative emotions (DeNora, 2000; Shankar, 2000). Within this thesis, it is argued that music which was previously considered to be a symbolic object representative of a personal relationship such as partner, parent, and friend or close relative, may be rejected or manipulated leading to a shift and evolution of function and meaning of the music accordingly.

1.10 Identity development according to Erikson

One of the fundamental elements to Erikson's oeuvre on identity was his notion that identity was not shaped by psychological processes alone but social and biological factors also held equal importance and all three elements interacted with each other (Kroger, 2002. His global view of identity incorporating the social as well as psychological and biological was one of the primary reasons why his theories of identity development were selected in relation to the influence of identity on the trajectory of music preferences. Thus my epistemological position on questions of identity is to argue in line with Côté & Levine (2002) and Vignoles, Schwartz & Luyckx (2012), that academic enquiry on identity should not necessarily be between a dichotomous argument between psychological processes and individual differences versus a social constructed identity; but in effect these approaches are two sides of the same coin.

Erikson (1968) suggested that one of the primary tasks for adolescents was to achieve the fundamental goal of a coherent sense of identity and self-definition, having explored alternatives and committed themselves to their sense of identity (Archer, 1999; Tesch & Cameron, 1987; Schwartz, 2006). Erikson (1963) argued that identity development should neither begin nor end at adolescence, but it is a continual chain that links childhood to adulthood and old age. Central to Erikson's theories on identity development was his epigenetic life cycle. Although he recognized that adolescence was a critical period for identity development, identity continued to evolve over nine stages of the life cycle across the

lifespan from infancy to very old age. He developed the notion that identity development was based upon eight psychosocial crises or challenges (later expanded to nine in the final years of his life by his wife and collaborator Joan Erikson), whereupon each of us is faced with a challenge to resolve (or not) at each psychosocial identity crisis or challenge across the lifespan. It is important to note that the trajectory between crises was most likely to be a gradual overlapping process, rather than a sudden jolt from one stage to another. In order for successful identity development to occur under Erikson's broad psychosocial approach, three interconnected domains were required to dovetail simultaneously (Côté & Levine, 2002). These domains include the subjective or ego-identity (a sense of sameness remaining constant throughout lifespan experiences); the personal domain, our personal cognitive or behavioural differences and interactions with others; and the social strands of identity, our recognized roles within social environments. Equilibrium in the domains of a subjective, personal and social identity, led to successful identity development. Consequently a healthy sense of identity provided the individual with the skill to deal effectively with the challenges of daily life (Schwartz, 2006). Failure to resolve an identity crisis led to identity confusion and an increased likelihood of self-destructive and negative behaviour (Anthis & LaVoie, 2006; Schwartz, 2006; Thornton, 2008).

Importantly, identity construction in effect remained a lifelong process of evolution, whereby identity changed in response to psychosocial challenges that occur through the lifespan (Archer, 1999; Hart, Maloney & Damon, 1987). Erikson's theories on ego-identity, that is the sense of sameness of identity across the lifespan, were developed after World War II, having treated soldiers who had returned home after the physical and psychological traumas of war. An illustration of this sense of sameness in the face of significant lifespan changes is evident in the following section taken from his book Youth and Identity (1963: 42):

What impressed me the most was the loss in these men of a sense of identity. They knew who they were; they had a personal identity. But it was as if, subjectively, their lives no longer hung together-and would never again…this sense of identity provides the ability to experience one's self as something that has continuity and sameness and to act accordingly .

The three fundamental interactive tripartite elements of psychological, biological and social processes shape one's identity in response to the challenges of life experiences (Kroger, 2002). Erikson believed that adolescents who had achieved an identity having explored the alternatives and had (re)committed themselves to their own values, beliefs and choices, were well positioned to cope with the developmental psychosocial crises that often arise in adolescence and beyond. By contrast, those without a definitive identity, who had neither explored nor committed themselves to any particular values, were in 'role confusion' and were more likely to be involved in drug taking and delinquent behaviour. However to avoid unnecessary repetition, I will return to explore Erikson's theories on identity development and the arguments which surround the operationalisation of his theories by Marcia (1966) in the literature review for the quantitative study, covered in the next chapter.

1.11 Mead's emergent self

Mead's global sense of identity, his strong philosophical belief in pragmatism and his belief in evolution theories underpin my arguments that individuals' music preferences evolve because of the development of the self, in response to changing social relationships and social interaction. Echoes of Erikson's identity development theories are hard to ignore. Another fundamental reason why I believe Mead's definition of the self fits my particular research problem is based upon his own philosophical approach of pragmatism and his deep seated social and theological humanism. I will explore pragmatism in greater detail as part of the literature research on symbolic interactionism, but for now I will highlight how American pragmatist theory and the search for relative or provisional truths were socially and temporally orientated, and how these concepts informed Mead's construction of the emergent self.

Mead's self did not exist in the supernatural, nor in introspective philosophical ruminations but in the harsh realities of daily life, in the here and now (Denzin, 2004; Ferguson, 1996; Plummer, 1991).[3] In particular, I am drawn towards his humanistic and pragmatic beliefs which were infused with a strong antipathy towards deep, introspective philosophical arguments on the construction of the self and the locality of the mind. His antagonism towards complex philosophical argument underpins my approach to reject postmodern notions of the construction of the self through language. Mead's self constructed out of social interaction differs from a postmodernist view of the self because Mead's self is always rooted in the here and now of daily lives and not in complex linguistic tautology and is always 'in process' (Frith, 1996; Jackson, 2010). In short it pays scant regard to the post-modernist view of 'the death of the author' (Plummer, 1990).

Mead's self had multiple different constructs of identity. These evolved out of the interplay between how individuals imagined others thought about his or her actions and choices and our actions as members of society and social interaction. In effect, Mead (1934) argued that any act or reaction or conversation is governed by how the individual imagines how others will see his or her actions both before and after the act has taken place. Or to put it another way, we see ourselves as we imagine others see us. According to Mead (1934), we are born with a blank slate and the self is developed through social interaction and personal experience, a marked and determined step away from any notions of the apparent biological givens of personality development (e.g. McCrae & Costa, 1990). Mead believed that children develop a sense of self through the use of significant symbols that is the role of language, to understand the role of others by imagining themselves in that role. This was largely achieved through play where the child plays the role of mother or father with his or her toys. By understanding and

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[3]Mead was a committed social and theological humanist who believed in social reform to aid and 'give voice' to those less advantaged through politics or social norms. He dedicated his life to social reform to assist in the emancipation of women, to help those in servitude and those who were discriminated against because of the colour of their skin. He also rejected outright the notion of the existence of a God. His theories on social activity were underpinned by a strong pragmatic and anti-deterministic belief. He suggested that any human action or thought was not due to any supernatural force or deity, but due to proactive agentic individuals, possessed with a mind and intelligence.

adopting the language of the parents, the child understood his or her position and sense of self in relation to others, parents, siblings and other key relatives.

After early childhood and primary school years, the adolescent self learns the roles of others and their own understanding of their own self through a strong focus on the meaning and consequences of words and actions. Thus the adolescent self continues to develop through personal experiences and social interaction but mediated through a shift in preferred social groups away from immediate family and more towards their own peers. So for example, he or she learns that the best way to be accepted as part of a social group is to assimilate the socially constructed rules within their own self. These may be how to dress, speak to members of the opposite sex, figures of authority, how to behave to create a specific pre-designed image, to learn the uses and impact of particular language set and behave in accordance with the socially constructed language; but most importantly Mead believed that all decisions, actions originated from within the individual. If these actions are not salient to the individual's identity then they are rejected and the individual makes his or her own proactive choices.

Mead suggested that only by taking the role of the other can we truly understand our own actions and appreciate who we are. For Mead, language was pivotal in this transition as this set us apart from the lower order animals. Importantly, Mead's self was not solely created out through a socially constructed sense of self but influenced by an interplay between personal experiences, biological factors (ageing processes) and social interaction. He maintained that because each individual brought their own experiences to society neither the individual nor society took precedence over the other, but were in a constant state of re-appraisal and renewal, each driving the other to adapt and learn new skills and actions. Due to the reciprocal relationship between these two concepts, the self was never a static phenomenon but evolved in response to social interaction and lifespan experiences. If music is who we are, an inherent aspect of our identity then I believe that Meads' theories of the emergent self support my argument that our music preferences are not a static phenomenon across the lifespan but shaped by

proactive choices in response to personal experiences, changing personal and social relationships, disequilibrating events and ultimately social interaction.

1.12 Epistemological Positioning

Before I provide an overview of this thesis and set out my research questions, I believe it is important to make a claim for the epistemological parameters, to confirm its position among the breadth of research on music preferences and music and identity. Despite its central argument to explore the trajectory of music preferences, this is not a postmodern, cultural studies thesis, neither is it a sociological thesis but one that is largely situated within music social psychology. In fact as I will demonstrate, postmodernism and the focus of language as a means of constructing and deconstructing the self are in fact positioned outside the locality of symbolic interactionism, which I use as my theoretical lens for the qualitative study. The focus of this thesis is an exploration on the development and trajectory of music preferences through a global approach to identity, of identity development, psychological processes and a social self, through the use of two methodological approaches. Due to the mixed methodological approach and design of this thesis, there will be no single literature search chapter but split between the two studies with the first literature review incorporated within the next chapter to position the quantitative study. The second literature review will occur prior to the qualitative study where I will explore the relationship between music and identity using a symbolic interactionist lens and drawing on Mead's theories of the self. Between the quantitative and qualitative studies, I argue why I believe the ontological arguments on music preferences should be re-examined within a symbolic interactionist lens but also incorporating and building upon the results of the first quantitative study. Thus not only will I examine the social determinants of music preferences but relate these to Erikson's notions of identity development and personality traits. In the concluding chapter, I will triangulate the findings from both studies to maintain my position that the methodological positioning each study holds equal worth. I do not argue for the superiority of either methodological approach but each is complementary to each other.

I feel it is important to make my position on the qualitative-quantitative debate clear. Sterile rehashed old arguments on the apparent superiority of one position over another are of no interest to me. The aim of the qualitative study was to address some of the questions and anomalies which arose from the on-line quantitative study, not to criticize survey research as inherently positivist research, or even claim that qualitative methodology is a true reflection of real life. While the qualitative study informed my arguments of the development and evolution of music preferences with the real-world experiences, by no means is the qualitative study considered to be a conduit to the 'truth'. That argument is considered to be a fallacy. The accounts kindly provided by the participants for my interview study were treated as accounts of experience, not as narratives of true experience (Silverman, 2005).

1.13 Model of mixed methodology

In order to design an appropriate model which incorporated both the quantitative study and the sequential qualitative study within the chronological framework, I designed a mixed methodology model (figure.1), adapted from the model of profoundisation, which is also sometimes called a sequential model (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009). The qualitative study was used to enhance, elaborate and validate the findings of the quantitative study. As noted earlier, it was fundamental to avoid a two tier model whereby the results of the first study are disregarded in favour of the other. Thus the results of my quantitative study would inform and shape my academic enquiry to develop and construct a broad theoretical understanding of the evolution of music preferences across the lifespan. Naturally there were shortcomings in the quantitative study and so one of the primary aims of the qualitative study was to address some of the shortcomings and questions raised. However it is considered to crucial to recognize that the first study was extremely useful in determining and informing how I approached and adapted my qualitative enquiry.

The model of profoundisation (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009) is positioned on quantitative study-results of quantitative study-qualitative study-triangulation of results continuum. Following the

qualitative study, I triangulated the results of both studies and to draw inferences on the factors which

shape the development and evolution of music preferences across the lifespan.

Fig. 1 Mixed methodology model of music preferences

Adapted from model of profoundisation Langdridge & Hagger Johnson (2009).

Quantitative
On-line study (n=763)
(2010)

Results

Qualitative
Interview Study
(n=62)
(2012)

Triangulated Results

Future Research on Music
Preferences as a Symbolic
Object of Identity using a
Mixed Methodological
Approach
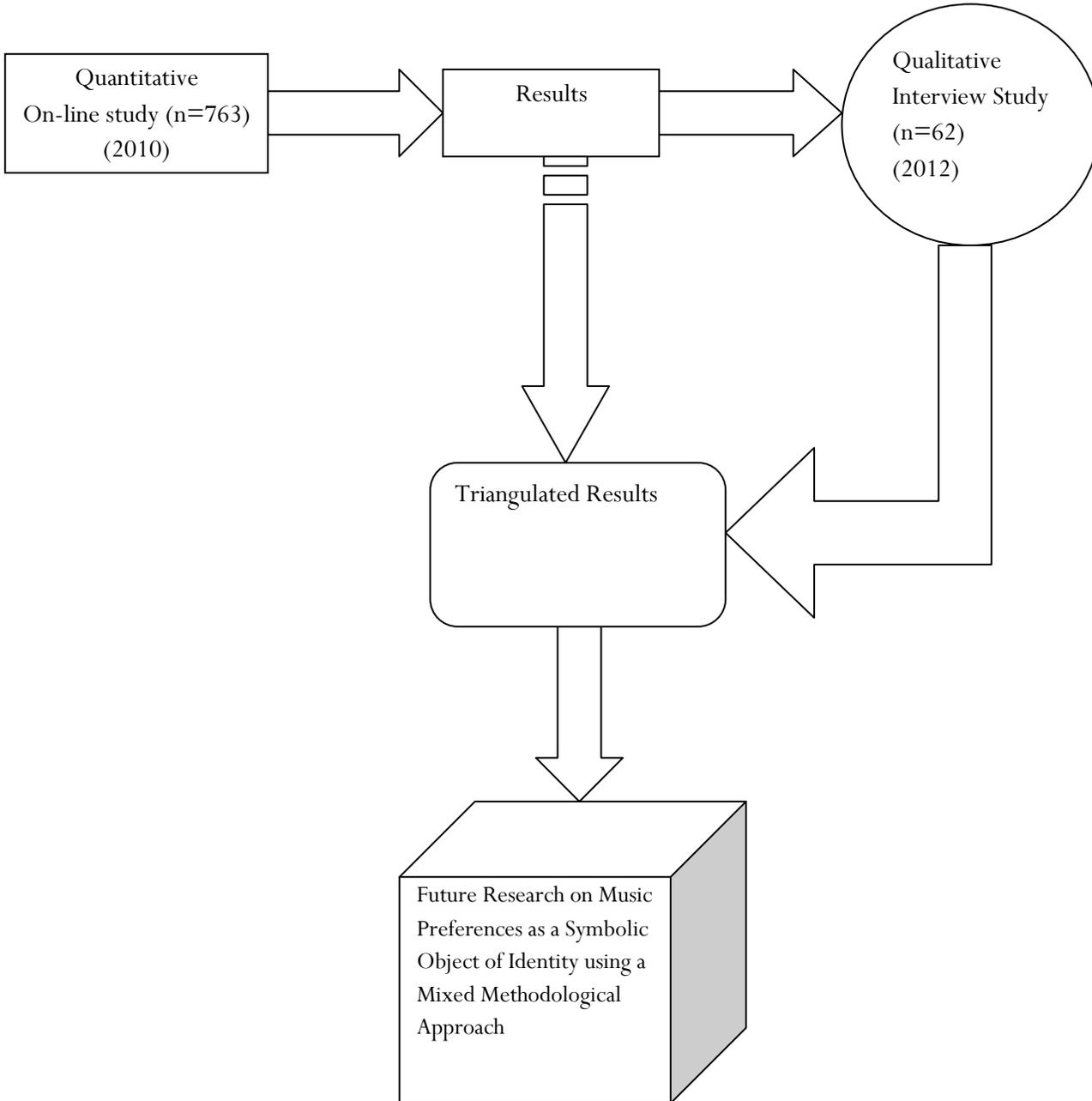
1.14 Overview of thesis

In chapter 2, I will review the current literature on the relationship between music preferences and individual differences. The initial section will review the importance of music in adolescent daily lives and examine the differences beyond this critical period. I also review the current arguments on the relationship between music preferences and individual differences such as personality traits, estimated IQ, and age. In Chapter 3 I will set out the aims, objectives, methodology and results of the quantitative study. Although there are a number of different batteries of personality typology, I explored the relationship with the Big Five personality typology because this popular tool has been used in a number of studies to explore the relationship between music preferences and individual differences. In the quantitative study (n=763), I replicated and expanded the seminal work by Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008) (he also replicated their work but adopted a more nuanced approach to personality typology and its relationship with music preferences). In addition to examining the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and the four broad music dimensions, I assessed whether significant differences could be ascertained between the music taste palate of younger participants aged 17-24 years and older participants aged 25 years and older. However I extended previous research to quantifiably measuring the identity dimension of Commitment and Exploration, through a neo-Eriksonian approach using the EIPQ tool (Balistreri *et al*, 1995). These two dimensions underpin much of Erikson's oeuvre. The most popular elaboration model of Erikson's oeuvre is Marcia's (1966) Identity Status Model which has been used almost extensively on adolescent identity development and formation (Meeus, Iedema & Maassen, 2002). Marcia's model bifurcates the two identity dimensions of Commitment and Exploration along a high / low continuum to create four identity status models. Each of the four statuses is based upon the level of Commitment and Exploration that each may or may not have explored in relation to their values and lifestyle choices.

My population was drawn from an age range that extended beyond the traditional undergraduate age population. To determine the strength of the relationship between personality traits, estimated IQ, age and the identity dimensions I moved beyond correlation analyses to carry out multiple simple regression analyses with the four music dimensions. However, following the quantitative study, further enquiry using a qualitative approach was warranted to build upon the results of the quantitative study. Although it was identified that individual differences only accounted for less than 20% of difference in the simple regression models; a heuristic enquiry through interviews was deemed necessary to explore the personal and social determinants that had shaped individuals' music preferences. In Chapter 4, I decided to review and re-examine the ontological questions of music preferences. In particular I explored why researcher-led classifications of music genres may be considered problematic in light of temporal, cultural and geo-political contexts. I examined the difficulties in genres classification through an exploration of the term rock music. In addition, the framework of music is never static with fluctuating popularity of different music styles. Chapter 5 sets out through the second literature search the theoretical background to symbolic interactionism to justify my reasons to draw on Mead's theories of the self which have informed much of symbolic interactionist theory. In light of the many different and sometimes contradictory interpretations of symbolic interactionism, I argue for a re-examination and rescue of raw Median theory. The current dominant model of symbolic interactionism is an interpretive cultural studies model which is heavily embedded in postmodernism and philosophy. It has been well established that Mead rejected deep introspective complex philosophy in favour of understanding the common man, the underprivileged and the voiceless 'as they see the world'. Therefore I argue for a return to Median theory. In Chapter 6, I set my methodology of thematic analysis for the qualitative study and I demonstrate why I used coding to draw together significant themes of my data. In the qualitative study (n=62), I expanded on Mead's theories of the emergent self and the traditional school of symbolic interactionism, to explore through the use of heuristic semi-structured interviews, how the development and trajectory of music preferences as symbolic representations of identity evolved across the lifespan.

It would appear that changing social relationships such going to university are significant triggers for preference shift. It was surprising the number of participants who stated that they previously rejected tastes from adolescence now formed part of their palate and unexpected events may have a significant pivotal effect on the palate. It was also evident that a increasing number of middle aged and older adults were turning to the internet and media or social websites to negotiate and reconstruct their music preference palate. In the final discussion chapter, Chapter 7, I review the aims and objectives of both studies and review my research questions. The quantitative study was extremely useful to explore the relationship between music dimensions and individual differences. Although my study largely supported previous research, it was interesting to note some the significant differences which were found when I compared my results with the Rentfrow & Gosling's (2003) and Zweigenhaft's (2008) studies. Some of these differences may be due to geo-political and ideological variations. However it was evident that through independent-samples t-tests, older adults had higher levels of Exploration than younger individuals. This finding appears to suggest and support the findings of my qualitative study that music preferences are not static across the lifespan but evolve in response to a number of challenges, significant age-related events and natural maturation. Individuals of all ages undergo periods of re-examination and re-commitment of their music preferences. I also suggested that symbolic interactionism may revise the relationship between music and identity in individuals of all ages to encompass a broader interpretation of identity beyond the realms of social integration theory. I advocated a mixed methodological approach to re-examine Erikson's Commitment and Exploration supported by symbolic interactionism to explore the development and trajectory of music preferences across the lifespan through a series of longitudinal studies.

Chapter 2. Quantitative study literature search

2.1 The importance of music in daily life

In comparison to the wealth of research on adolescent music preferences, there is a limited amount of research dedicated to exploring the trajectory of music preferences beyond early adulthood. Much is known in relation to the psychological and social processes which shape and reflect adolescents' music preferences. It is also true that there is a plethora of research on the cognitive reasons why adolescents select their music preferences, which largely dictates that their music is used for primarily for image management and to establish and confirm their values to themselves, their peers and to the wider social community. In light of the hegemony of adolescent music preferences this thesis will explore two main issues. Firstly whether these same psychological and social processes, such as personality traits and social group affiliation, which are considered so important during the critical period of adolescence in the development of music preferences; have the same impact in adulthood (Bonneville-Roussy, 2013; Lamont & Webb 2010). Secondly, I will explore some of the significant variations in which adults use their music differently than in adolescence.

Interestingly, numerous studies on personality trait typology have revealed robust age related normative patterns of change across the lifespan which largely correspond to lifespan experiences, challenges and expectations relationships, university, increased responsibility of family and retirement (John & Srivastava, 1999; Roberts *et al*, 2006; Specht *et al*, 2011). If there are normative age related changes associated with personality typology, it is of great interest to identify if there are similar changes in identity development associated with Erikson's identity dimensions of Commitment and Exploration. Or is there a continual flux and renewal between Commitment and Exploration across the lifespan, in response to age related challenges? If Erikson's identity dimensions of Exploration and Commitment

were found to have a significant predictive relationship with age, then how might these dimensions translate on to the cultural practices of adult daily life? Do adults use the internet to download music to search for new music styles or do they explore back catalogues of established artists drawn from their own musical palate? How did they find about these new music styles? Are there age-related patterns that map out when Exploration levels are at their highest and Commitment levels at their lowest? Conversely if preferences do crystallise by early adulthood, will there be a significant predictive relationship between Commitment and age? Will Commitment rise in old age in response to the Hargreaves and LeBlanc notion of a decrease in open-earedness (Hargreaves, 1982; LeBlanc, 1991)?

Therefore the main aim of this chapter is to review the current literature on music preferences to identity where my research problem sits in comparison with previous research on music preferences. Another aim of this review is to justify and position my research questions for my on-line quantitative study, which drew on and expanded the work of Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008) to explore the relationship between individual differences and music preferences. The first section will explore the importance of music to adolescents. It is widely accepted within academic and non-academic literature that adolescents are the largest group of consumers. However, I also argue that due to a significant evolution in technological advancements with music playing devices and the multitude of ways to access one's music, there has been a shift in music cultural practices that has widened the age range of individuals using the internet to seek and share their preferred music (Giles *et al*, 2009; Heye & Lamont, 2010; Krause & Hargreaves, 2013). It is suggested that because of technological advancements, interconnectivity and portability of devices such as smart phones, tablets, i-pods MP3 & MP4 players and laptops, thousands of music tracks and videos can be accessed, download and stored in an instant. Technological advancements have shifted our understanding of the questions that surround the relationship between music cultural practices and identity.

The second section explores the two research articles fundamental to this study, Rentfrow and Gosling's (2003) seminal work and Zweigenhaft's (2008) more nuanced repeat study on the relationship between individual differences and music preferences. The third section examines the historical development of impact of both the Big Five and Erikson's theories on identity development. Erikson did not operationalise his work and his theoretical writing is considered by some (e.g. Côté & Levine, 1987, Schwartz *et al*, 2009) to be rather abstract. The most popular model of operationalisation in identity research is the identity status model Marcia (1966). The identity status model (Marcia, 1966) is based upon the two central tenets of Erikson's theories on identity development, Commitment and Exploration. Although Marcia's (1966) model remains a popular instrument on identity development, it is not widely accepted throughout the research community. For this study, due to inconsistencies in the content and development of the statuses, the two identity dimensions of Commitment and Exploration were considered to be more relevant measures of identity than the four statuses themselves (Johnson *et al*, 2007; Meeus, Iedema & Maassen, 2002; Waterman, 1999).

2.2 Adolescents and adults as consumers

There is vast wealth of research carried out over the last few decades on music preferences which has focused predominantly on adolescents' music preference largely because it to help them deal with a broad range of psychosocial and emotional issues. In short music is used to negotiate, understand and validate their feelings and emotions (Arnett, 1995; Juslin & Sloboda, 2001; Juslin *et al,*2008; Lundqvist *et al*, 2009; North, Hargreaves & Hargreaves, 2004; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Zillman & Gan, 1997). Music is used in a variety of ways which include as a means to negotiate and construct of their own sense of identity (Frith, 1983; North & Hargreaves, 1999; Lamont & Webb, 2010; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002). Repeated studies have shown that adolescents place listening to music, doing music related activities, talking about music, buying clothes and hairstyles in line with their choice of music as *the* most important activity of their lives (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013; Fitzgerald *et al*, 1985; Frith,

1983; Lamont & Webb, 2010; Lonsdale & North, 2011; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006; Rentfrow, Goldberg & Levitin, 2011; Zillman & Gan, 1997). It has often been noted that adolescents' choice of music is seen as a 'badge of identity' as a means to confirm to themselves as much as to their peers not only their music choices but also their values (Frith, 1983; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; Greasley *et al*, 2013; Krause & Hargreaves, 2012; North & Hargreaves, 1999, 2002; Hargreaves & North, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006, 2007; Rentfrow, Goldberg & Levitin, 2011; Rentfrow *et al*, 2012; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003). For the vast majority of adolescents, music creates a fundamental forum for the development of personal and social identity (Crozier, 1997; North & Hargreaves, 1999, North, Hargreaves & O'Neill, 2000; Lamont & Webb, 2010; Rentfrow, Goldberg & Levitin, 2011; Russell, 1997; Tarrant , North & Hargreaves, 2002; Tekman & Hortesçu). Music appears to help the adolescent negotiate and consolidate his or her own sense of identity, in response to the many psychological and social challenges of adolescence and young adulthood (Erikson, 1968). In addition, music is often used as a tool for social group identification, affiliation and delineation (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Frith, 1983; Giles *et al*, 2009; Mark, 1998; North & Hargreaves, 1999; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006, 2007; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002; Tekman & Hortesçu, 2002).

Another reason for the dominance of research on adolescent music preferences is that adolescents are the largest group of consumers of music (Christenson & Peterson, 1988; Delsing *et al*, 2008; Higdon & Stephens, 2008; The Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003). Not only do they dedicate a large proportion of their daily lives associated with music, but they also commit a huge financial investment to engage and follow their favourite music styles and adhere to the appropriate fashion styles (Giles *et al*, 2009; Higdon & Stephens, 2008; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Rentfrow, Goldberg & Levitin, 2011; Zillmann & Gan, 1997). On average, it is estimated that American adolescents will have listened to 10,000 hours of music by the time they leave high school (Higdon & Stephens, 2008; Mark, 1998; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003). A more recent series of studies carried out by

The Kaiser Family Foundation (2010) in 1999, 2004 & 2009, examined the use of media by 8-18 year olds. The authors estimated that on average, adolescents spent 2 hours and 31 minutes per day listening to music, which is consistent with previous research (North, Hargreaves & O'Neill, 2000; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2000; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009). However, it should also be noted that The Kaiser Family Foundation (2010) study separated television watching hours which also included watching dancing competitions, DVDs and music videos, from music listening hours all of which could also be classified as music consumption. Therefore if these activities were included as part of music cultural practices, then the true music listening hours is probably higher than the two and a half hours a day as suggested. It would be of great interest to see whether in their next study The Kaiser Family Foundation measure the amount of listening hours that include multi-media devices to compare with their previous studies (if that is their intention of course). For example, compared to previous cultural practices, when music was limited to purchasing a physical object or the mainstream media, recent technological advancements have provided adolescents as well as adults and older aged adults with a wide access to a large variety of music styles and genres on a variety of formats such as MP-3 player, internet, mobile phones and smart phones allowing a continual flow of media product consumption and the ability to search, download and select his or her preferred music in an instant. These changes have reduced the need for physical space to store the music and the individual can purchase their preferred music albeit back catalogues of music from their past or search for new music on the recommendation of friends and strangers alike through the use of social media sites, without the need to leave the house. Therefore, it is suspected here that the current average number of listening hours to music per day will be significantly higher than the two and a half hours, as found by The Kaiser Family Foundation (2010), simply because of the interconnectivity, portability and the instant availability and sharing of music across the internet and the social and media networks. [4]

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[4]Since I carried out the on-line study in 2010, Krumhansl & Zupnick (2013) have noted that the average amount of hours per week

There is however a burgeoning growth in research on music cultural practices beyond adolescence which suggests that adults are becoming increasingly confident to use the internet, download music and create digital playlists (Heye & Lamont, 2010; Krause & Hargreaves, 2013). This may be associated with an increased use of technology by middle aged and older aged adults (ONS, 2013). Yet the amount of research dedicated to adult music preferences is miniscule in comparison to adolescents' tastes. As noted earlier, this may be due to one argument which has prevailed from the late 1980s, before the advent of the internet, the digital age and social and media websites; which concerns the apparent crystallization of music preferences from young adulthood onwards (Delsing *et al,* 2008; Hargreaves & North, 1997b; Holbrook & Schindler, 1989; Mulder *et al*, 2008; North & Hargreaves, 1995, 2002). This argument is enhanced by studies which show that the music established within this critical period of development of taste (Lamont & Webb, 2010) is one that most of us remember and cherish most fondly (Hargreaves & North, 2002, 2008; Holbrook & Schindler, 1989; Krumhansl & Zupnick, 2013). Closely associated with the argument for a crystallization of music tastes is the notion that music is less important in adulthood largely because adults are less concerned with the role of music as a badge of identity, as a signifier of group affiliation and delineation and of course it is assumed that the identity development concerns of adolescence have been resolved by adulthood (Chamorro-Premuzic *et al,* 2010; Harrison & Ryan, 2009; LeBlanc, 1982, 1991; LeBlanc *et al*, 1996; Lonsdale & North, 2011; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009, 2010).

The counter argument against the crystallisation of music tastes proposes that one's music preferences are neither static nor are markedly less important. Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, (2013) found that age was related to a shift in the types of music which individuals preferred. Age was positively related to a rejection of intense and aggressive styles such as rock, heavy metal, funk and rap and an increased liking for pop music, blues and classical music. This last point is interesting because it would appear to suggest

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dedicated to listening to music by college age students was 33.8 hours (4.8 hours per day). This figure is probably a truer reflection of the amount of hours dedicated to listening to music by adolescents.

that older individuals are more open-eared (Hargreaves, 1982; LeBlanc, 1991) to both complex and less complex music styles but less open-eared to more aggressive styles. Their findings only partially support the Hargreaves 1982, LeBlanc (1982, 1991), LeBlanc *et al*, 1996 approach which suggests that there is a reduction in open-earedness in old age. However, as will be discussed later on, in relation to the difficulties of genre classifications, the notion of complexity of music associated with age is considered problematic; for it does not necessarily follow that all jazz and classical music should be considered to be complex. It is argued here that specifications of genres are always subject to interpretation and various psychological and socio-cultural forces make a marked difference to the interpretation. In addition, it is not clear is whether a liking for complex music by adults is a new development of their music palate or whether the individuals had always liked this type of music, but through maturation, actively making more sedate lifestyle choices, different social groups, the preferred music (both complex and non-complex) is now a more appropriate symbolic representation of their identity than the intense styles of music.

What is known thus far is that there is a higher probability that complex music (classical music, jazz, blues) is liked by adults, particular older aged adults than younger adults and adolescents (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007; Harrison & Ryan, 2009; Hargreaves and North 1997b; LeBlanc, 1982, 1991, LeBlanc *et al,* 1996; North & Hargreaves, 2002, 2008; Russell, 1997). Yet it should be noted the exact reasons why older adults should like complex music more than younger individuals is not fully understood. It is perhaps because of a lack of exposure of complex to younger individuals because they are considered socially to be of low status. In short it is not considered to be socially acceptable to like classical music, jazz and blues. Alternatively, it may be a question of physical development and cognitive function, whereby adolescent brains are not fully developed to understand or appreciate the musical attributes contained within this music (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2007, Chamorro-Premuzic *et al,* 2010; Giles *et al*, 2009; Hargreaves & North, 2008; Russell, 1997). It has also been established that popular

music is liked by young adolescents and late aged adults (Hargreaves & North, 2002; LeBlanc, 1991; LeBlanc *et al*, 1996) but the taste trajectory and genres preferences of middle aged adults is largely unexplored (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013) .

Interestingly, Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, (2013) noted that when they compared the level of importance which adolescents and adults afforded to their own music preferences, there was a reduction in levels of importance for adults but this drop was only marginal compared to those from a younger age group. Further examination of the research reveals that adults, similar to adolescents, use music to deal with a number of psychosocial issues. These issues may be to deal with the complexities of daily life, emotions, nostalgia and memories of past relationships or events (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013; DeNora, 2000; Greasley *et al*, 2013; Hays & Minichiello, 1995; Harrison & Ryan, 2009; Laukka, 2007; Lundqvist *et al*, 2009; Shankar *et al*, 2009). Thus it is argued here that although it is likely that adolescents remain the largest group of consumers of music in terms of listening hours per day; a comparison of daily consumption of music and levels of importance between adults and adolescents may reveal that the disparity between the two groups may not be as vast as some researchers have implicitly suggested (e.g. Delsing *et al*, 2008; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009, 2010). In addition, it would appear that there are differences in patterns of music consumption. For example there is some research which suggests adults prefer to listen to their music within their own personal spheres, such as the home, the car, the garden shed rather than share social spaces (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013; Greasley *et al*, 2013; Heye & Lamont, 2010). These patterns may be due to the portability and interconnectivity of devices or a natural transition in music practices. Music is used to fulfill more personal needs rather than act as a social badge of identity.

DeNora (2000) noted in her study of the role of music in the daily lives of women that they engaged with and utilized their music as a way of remembering key events, emotions, relationships.[5] In other words the women used their music as symbolic representations of their identity to reconstruct and revoke past identities at will. DeNora (2000: 46) suggested that due to the strong associations that music held of the past, music had become a 'technology of the self'. It is also important to note that at the time of the DeNora study (2000), the internet was in its infancy as a method of sharing and downloading music and the technical devices to play music from the internet were limited to computers, laptops and MP3 players. Smart phones had yet to be invented and social media sites such as Facebook, Bebo and MySpace were just becoming a part of British cultural practices, but the interconnectivity of devices and media websites was extremely basic compared to the ubiquitous nature of devices today. On comparison, the interconnectivity of devices, portability and ease of accessibility with instant on-line sharing of one's music today belies a very different cultural context and music cultural practices to the one that existed when DeNora's (2000) study was carried out nearly fifteen years ago. The instant accessibility and interconnectivity of devices has radically changed the way which we think about music consumption and engagement and how music is used in a variety of settings (Heye & Lamont, 2010; Krause & Hargreaves, 2012). The ability to make playlists, shuffle the order of the music to suit the individual's emotional needs or the appropriate choice for the social context, downloading playlists from other individuals or radio stations, sharing music or to follow links to digital music files are just some of the many choices available to the music consumer today. In fact the agency of these choices fits neatly into two important theories drawn from Mead's (1934) oeuvre; the proactive nature of individuals to shape their own environment and the development and constant evolution of the meaning of language, the object and society. One of the primary benefits of the multimedia devices such as smart phones,

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[5] DeNora only studied the role of music in women's lives, as she put it to redress the balance but in doing so has created an imbalance which is in itself an ironic paradox. I am unaware of any gender imbalance within music psychology research. In fact most studies carried out in universities and colleges have noted a larger proportion of female participants than male participants.

tablets, i-pods is the interconnectivity and portability of devices. In effect our music is accessible to suit our needs at our will (Shankar *et al*, 2009).

Shankar *et al* (2009) also noted that music was a durable object, representative of one's sense of identity, which could be 'recovered and reflected upon at will'. The authors carried out a series of interviews as part of a qualitative study to explore how music preferences are symbolic representation of past identities. Interestingly, the authors also suggested that these preferences are the ideal forum to explore an individual's previous lifestyle choices, values and their past identity formation and development. Yet authors have come up short by selecting only one narrow age range for study. It is also noted that the Shankar study did not explore whether technical advancements had had any impact on the music practices of these adults to remember these past identities. In addition, by failing to compare current music preferences with past tastes they have failed to fully explore the relationship between the trajectory of music preferences and identity development. One of the primary aims of this thesis is to rectify this shortfall.

The second issue to be addressed in this chapter is concerned with the relationship between music, identity and psychological characteristics. As highlighted earlier, the badge of identity (Frith, 1983; North & Hargreaves, 1999) associated with music preferences is often associated with social group delineation and affiliation, but there is also a large body of research which suggests that while one's social group affiliation and influences are related to self-esteem issues (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Crozier, 1997; North, Hargreaves & O'Neill, 2000; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002; Tekman & Hortesçu, 2002), music preferences also reflect the individual's psychological characteristics such as his or her personality traits and probable cognitive behavioural patterns (North & Hargreaves, 1999; Rentfrow & Gosling 2003, 2006, 2007; Rentfrow Goldberg & Levitin, 2011; Rentfrow *et al*, 2012; Rentfrow, McDonald & Oldmeadow, 2009; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Zweigenhaft, 2008). Consequently, it would appear that music preferences provide two significant levels of information that firmly position

the adolescent individual in their social world formation and at the same time project the individual's fundamental psychological processes that occur during this often difficult period of identity formation. Naturally, these signifiers are not mutually exclusive. However, because the trajectory of preferences beyond adolescence has to a largely extent been ignored; what is not evident is whether these same psychological processes, considered so critical during this period of identity formation, are just as important beyond adolescence to influence the trajectory of music preferences across the lifespan. However if Erikson's (1968) assertion holds true, that identity development is a life-long unfolding process shaped by altered social contexts, life maturation and disequilibrating lifespan experiences; then it stands to reason that the trajectory of music preferences and their function of identity may alter accordingly. Music is inherently associated to identity (Cook, 1998; Frith, 1996) and like other media products, music taste is subject to change through maturation and other socio-political factors (Zukin & Smith Maguire, 2004). Tastes naturally change and it has been noted that there may be a narrowing of musical taste palate in older aged individuals (Harrison & Ryan, 2009; Hargreaves & North, 2008; LeBlanc 1991, LeBlanc *et al*, 1996). Whether this change is due to changing social relationships, identity development, significant events such as loss of spouse or change in home environments due to illness or physical infirmity, has so far overlooked. In addition, due to technological advancements and wider IT support programmes for older individuals (ONS, 2013), it is not clear whether these changes in ways of engaging with one's music may have a significant effect on the taste trajectory.

2.3 Social Integration Theory

One other issue which is considered problematic is the position that the relationship between music and identity may be largely mediated by Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Research exploring the relationship between music and social identity is mainly concerned with the importance of social group affiliation and identification. In adolescence, a sense of belonging and differentiation from other social groups is highly important as they try to establish their own sense of identity and values. Values and beliefs are often learned from their own social groups and peers. Thus from a SIT

perspective, it is argued that music is used to establish and confirm social group affiliation or delineation and strongly related to self-esteem issues, which are highly relevant to many adolescents during this often difficult period of growth and development (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Frith, 1983; Giles *et al*, 2009; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves; Tekman & Hortesçu, 2002).

Yet as noted according to both Erikson (1968) and Mead (1934), identity and issues related to identity are not solely located within this single specific time period. And thus it is considered unlikely that identity issues such as the group membership and identity development issues of adolescence are similar to someone of middle age or late adulthood (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013; Harrison & Ryan, 2009). Consequently SIT may be inappropriate or limited to explore the relationship between music and the personal and social identity issues in adulthood. Yet this is not to deny that music preferences are just as important in adulthood as they are in adolescence. However due to a variety of complex social friendship groups in adulthood, membership may be based around childhood friendships, employment, social activity groups, shared belief systems such as choice of religion or lifestyle choices and even internet and social media communities. Just as Arnett (1995) highlighted the importance of the sense of shared values within specific music orientated communities, the same sense of community applies today but the connections are much broader in comparison. For example, these may include persons who may share their preferences through social and cultural media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, You Tube or digital radio communities which are orientated towards a particular historical cultural moment. Most media websites have links with Facebook, Twitter or You Tube with a digital message board for listeners to share their likes, memories and recommendations for other tracks which they wish to hear.

The level of preference of music tastes established in adolescence may remain stable in adulthood but the function of the music may have shifted and the number of hours dedicated to the music may be reduced but there is no good reason to reject the notion that the importance of music is greatly diminished. I will briefly elaborate on these important points. A shift in function may occur because the current function

of the music reflects a different identity saliency than its original purpose in adolescence. For example, music which was originally purposefully selected in adolescence to create a certain social image, such as 'being interesting' or, sophisticated, articulate or tough may be viewed very differently in adulthood. Although the music still retains its high prestige status for the individual; the function and ways of engagement may have been affected because the social relationships have changed and the individual has matured. Of course, it is entirely possible that the function may have remained exactly the same, but this does not negate my argument that the level of importance as a symbolic object music remains the same.

Evidence from the semi-structured interviews largely supported my position that the importance of music remains strong in adulthood. A number of participants over the age of 25 years asserted that music was either just as important or indeed more important now, than compared to their adolescent years. Admittedly, there were some who noted that their music was less important to their current identity saliency, now but this was largely because they had embraced other cultural practices (e.g. artistic dance performances, theatre, reading) which were a more appropriate symbolic representation of their identity because these activities were shared with their partner. Whereas the music established adolescence and early adulthood represented the growth of their younger years to develop their own sense of identity; now in adulthood is assume that they have attained a strong sense of who they are with multiple roles and identities, as a loving partner, parent, professional, sibling, the role of music had become less important to confirm who they are now. Yet at the same time, although the level of importance and intensity of engagement had diminished, the level of preference for the music had remained undiminished. This music had become a symbolic representation of a past identity, but it is no longer salient to their current identity. A number of older participants recognized the significant impact that technical advancements had had on their cultural consumption habits. The portability and interconnectivity of their multimedia devices has provided them with greater ease of access to their

music and the opportunities to listen to new unfamiliar music styles to fulfill their own pre-determined function (cf. Rubin, 2002). Thus it would thus appear premature to reject or dismiss the notion that beyond adolescence, music ceases to be a fundamental part of our identity or that it is no longer an essential element to daily living. As the vast majority of current research on music preferences is mainly concerned with the relationship between individual differences and the establishment of music tastes, it was deemed appropriate to replicate previous studies but with a broader age range of participants. It was of particular interest to examine and explore music preferences and the relationship between music and identity beyond adolescence through comparison of the mean ratings of music genres between younger and older participants. It was recognized that while it would be futile to suggest that the preferences for the older participants would be the future taste plate for the younger participants, it would however provide a valuable insight in taste patterns across the lifespan at this moment of time of cultural history.

2.4 Music and personality

Music preferences have thus been shown to be extremely important for adolescents to adopt, adapt, formulate, consolidate, discard and renegotiate a self-identity. Music has also been shown to help adolescents to establish their values within their personal and social worlds (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; De Nora, 2003; Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald, 2002; Mulder *et al*, 2008; North & Hargreaves, 1999). The vast majority of researchers that have explored the relationship between music preferences and personality traits have used a simple coherent taxonomy, commonly known as the Big Five or the translated equivalents (Delsing *et al*, 2008; Dollinger, 2003; Dunn *et al,* 2012*;* Higdon & Stephens, 2008; Mulder *et al*, 2008; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, Rentfrow *et al*, 2012; Zweigenhaft, 2008). Notable exceptions have been Schwartz & Fouts, (2003) who used the Millon Adolescent Personality Inventory (MAPI; Millon *et al*, 1982) which as the name suggests designed to quantify specific personality characteristics and development issues during adolescence. The other exception is Pearson, Dollinger, (2004) who explored the relationship between music preferences and personality using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) based upon Jung's theories (1927).

In their seminal article, Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) firmly established the relationship between personality traits as measured by the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999) and music preferences. The Big Five was developed in the 1990s after trait psychology researchers believed that personality traits could be organised into five broad dimensions using the lexical approach of everyday language, to describe individual differences that incorporated their affective reasoning and cognitive behaviour (Goldberg, 1992; McCrae & Costa, 1987, 1990; Pervin & Cervone, 2010). Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) asked participants to rate 14 music genres (later expanded to 23 (Zweigenhaft, (2008)) and through exploratory and factor analysis, they deduced that the music genres could be segregated into four dimensions, each dimension reflecting similar styles and complexities in music styles. The authors suggested that individuals who shared similar personality traits would share preference for these dimensions. These dimensions were labelled as follows: Reflective and Complex (preference for classical music, jazz, folk, blues), Intense and Rebellious (heavy metal, rock, and punk), Upbeat and Conventional (pop music, country, soundtracks) and Energetic and Rhythmic (dance, electronic, rap, soul, funk and hip-hop). Subsequent research which has explored music preferences and personality typology has demonstrated mixed results (Dunn *et al*, 2012), tempered by international differences (Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2009) and cultural differences on the attributes of the four music dimensions (Delsing et al, 2008). Others used a more nuanced approach to personality measurements (Zweigenhaft, 2008), while inconsistent correlations have been found to exist between personality traits and genres (Dunn *et al*, 2012; Zweigenhaft, 2008).

2.5 Uses and Gratification theory

Another possible explanation that may explain the relationship between music preferences and individual differences is the 'uses and gratification' theory. The 'uses and gratification' theory may be seen as a framework that underpins the strong and reliable correlations established between personality traits and music preferences (Delsing *et al*, 2008). This theoretical approach suggests that individuals select specific media in order to satisfy an inherent psychological need (Arnett; 1995; Delsing *et al*, 2008; Roy,

2009; Rubin, 2002). Thus as an illustration, extraverts who need a constant state of arousal for satisfaction enjoy social environments that are high in stimulation factors and are more likely to choose music that meets this need for optimum stimulation (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007). Extraversion is often significantly related to a preference for music that has a constant vigorous meter, is less complex and is used for social interaction such as dancing or clubs whereby the focus is perhaps less on the music itself than on the mix of music and social interaction. The implication of this theory is that individuals are not passive participants in the effects of music and other media but as active agents of choice. Rubin (2002) observed that individuals actively select their media because of what they can do with the music and not because of what media does to individuals. This argument fits neatly with Meadian theory of the proactive individual who shapes their own environment to suit their own needs. In turn human agency is proactive not reactive to stimuli. In the results and discussion section of this study, it is argued that the notion of identity construction through music is problematic on a number of levels but for reasons of brevity I will outline why this is so. Primarily my argument rests on an important issue. Music does not and cannot construct an identity. Music is an adjunct of identity, it reflects the salient identity and is extremely useful in the negotiation, construction and management of a specific identity, but above all it is not a supernatural over-arching controlling phenomenon that makes individuals behave or act without self-control (Denzin, 1992). Cognitive behaviour, which is often associated with music, such as dancing, acting tough, driving recklessly, clothes selection or hairstyles in accordance with the music style or just relaxing to a chillout CD for mood management, is best understood through Mead's (1934) humanistic theories on the importance of significant symbols, internal conversations and the pragmatic proactive individual. In short, action or agency associated with music is mediated through a consideration of others' opinions of one's actions. Mead suggested that the individual holds internal conversations with others which may be peers, parents or siblings, to justify his or her actions and their impact. However it is crucial within this thesis to establish that behaviour originates from within, as part of our identity in process (cf. Frith, 1996). Agency cannot be imposed

upon by music alone, other psychological and social forces lay a far stronger claim to agency than the music itself. This subject will be covered in-depth as part of the qualitative study when I argue that, through my theoretical lens of Mead's (1934) theories on the meaning of objects (which later formed the basis of symbolic interactionism) and individuals' responses to music are mediated by an interplay between social interaction and previous experiences (Mead, 1934, Blumer, 1969, Denzin, 1992).

2.6 Music and IQ

Another individual difference which has connotations with personality typology and may also lay claim to influencing music preferences is IQ. It is not my intention to enter into arguments whether IQ tests are a true measure of intelligence, the aim of this study was to explore the influence if any that an estimated IQ may have on music preferences in line with previous research. IQ is in itself a vast subject, therefore at this stage I will just discuss the findings that previous researchers have found in the relationship between music and IQ.

Although Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2007) did not examine the relationship between IQ and music genre preferences directly, they did identify a strong and consistent relationship between the function of music and IQ scores. Significant correlations were found with individuals who displayed high IQ scores and listening to complex challenging music in a rational/cognitive way (cf. Bourdieu, 1984), as opposed to either listening to music for mood management or as background music. Thus it would appear that individuals with higher levels of intelligence enjoy proactive selection and active negotiation with the music rather than creating 'sonic wallpaper' (Frith, 2002). There is some evidence to suggest that there are strong associations between the Big Five, intelligence and academic performance (Costa & McCrae, 1985; Goldberg, 1992; Holland *et al*, 1995) and predictors of academic achievement (Dollinger, Leong & Ulicni, 1996; Furnham *et al*, 2009; John *et al*, 1994; John & Srivastava, 1999). The strongest association between the Big Five and intelligence is perhaps the least understood trait, the fifth factor Openness. In one early version of the Big Five by Norman (1963), the fifth factor which later

became Openness was labelled Culture and included the adjectives intellectual, polished and independent minded. However interpretations of Openness vary. Some researchers have associated the association between Openness and intellect (Norman, 1963; Peabody & Goldberg, 1989; Goldberg, 1990, 1992); whereas alternative interpretations have stressed Openness with aesthetic enquiry, culture, open to new ideas and dismissed the strong association and insist that intellect forms only part of the broader lexical trait Openness (Costa & McCrae, 1992; John *et al*, 1994; John & Srivastava, 1999). For a fuller debate on the association between personality traits and intelligence, please read Goff and Ackerman, (1992), Holland *et al*, (1994) and John and Srivastava, (1999).

It was however in study 6 of Rentfrow & Gosling's (2003) series of studies that the authors provided valuable insight into the relationship between both measured and self-views of estimated IQ scores and with personality traits and music preferences. Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) found that there was a positive correlation between mean ratings for Reflective and Complex and Intense and Rebellious music with self-views of intelligence, plus verbal but not analytical intelligence. Individuals who liked Upbeat & Conventional music saw themselves as less intelligent and scored significantly low on verbal intelligence. Zweigenhaft (2008) did not measure intelligence *per se*, but examined the students' final course grades. The author also found that there was a positive correlation between high course grades and heavy metal and punk music and a negative correlation with country and rap. This finding by Zweigenhaft challenges the assumption that fans of rebellious music are likely to partake in wanton destruction, petty crime and reckless behaviour (e.g. Bleich *et al*, 1991). Achieving high course grades is rarely considered to be reckless and criminal behaviour. Interestingly, Bryson (1996) noted that both rap and country were related with low educational status, but so was heavy metal and it is evident that in both the Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) and the Zweigenhaft (2008) studies heavy metal is not strongly associated with low intelligence or educational status. The discrepancies in these studies would suggest that the relationship between music and measured intelligence is probably mediated by other significant

factors such as psychological processes and personality traits and identity development or other social determinants. The pathway between music and intelligence is an interesting relationship but not necessarily an easy path to judge or predict.

2.7 Music and Identity

In the introduction chapter, I drew attention to the fact that to the best of my knowledge, no study has quantifiably measured identity *per se* and its relationship to music. Consequently, I will briefly review Erikson's theories on identity development before I introduce and explore Marcia's (1966) model of operationalisation of Erikson's theories which bifurcates the identity dimensions of Commitment and Exploration into four separate identity statuses, but as noted earlier only the two dimensions were to be the focus of my research. It should be noted that this Marcia's model is not universally accepted as an accurate model of Erikson's theories and it remains a subject of continuing academic debate. In light of the contentious arguments which surround Marcia's operationalisation model I will draw attention to the arguments regarding the validity of the statuses, the fidelity to Erikson's theories and the hegemony of research on one specific part of his lifecycle.

According to Erikson's (1950, 1968) theories on identity development, one of the primary tasks for adolescents was to achieve the fundamental goal of a coherent sense of identity. It is also important to remember that identity was not centred around psychological processes alone but also involved biological as well as social factors. Each of these 'tripartite elements' (Kroger, 2002) were vital in shaping an individual's identity. According to Erikson, the individual who explored the alternatives to his or her commitments and lifestyle choices was ideally positioned to deal with the variety of psychosocial crises which often occur during and after adolescence. These persons had 'achieved' their identity. In contrast, those individuals who had neither explored nor committed to any particular lifestyle choice were deemed to have a weak, diffused sense of identity and he suggested that these individuals were in 'role confusion'. According to Erikson (1968) individuals who possessed no

definitive identity were more likely than others to be involved in criminal and anti-social behaviour, illicit drug taking. An illustration of the benefits of identity resolution and the negative impact that can occur when failure to achieve identity resolution in all three domains as set within the 'identity versus role confusion' life cycle is best described by Côté & Levine (2002 16):

When these community relations [social identity] are stable and continuous, people's personal and social identities are safeguarded. However, when these relations are unstable, people's personal and social identities come under pressure and may undergo revision. What is particularly important to note, however, is that unstable community relations (problems in "other-other" continuity) can create difficulties for those attempting the transition to adulthood. This is especially an issue for those younger members of society who do not have a sense of "self-self" continuity (ego identity) and those who experience unstable "self-other" relations.

In essence, Côté & Levine (2002) have identified the crucial interplay between the influential tripartite elements that shape identity. When each of the three elements is stable, the ego-identity is positive and the individual is well positioned to face the challenges ahead. In contrast, when there is a disjointed relationship between these elements, either through failure of resolution of previous challenges to their identity, albeit internal conflict (self-self continuity) or with other members of their immediate family or community (self-other relations); then the individual is not ideally positioned to deal with the challenges of adulthood. Unless the individual concerned is able to rectify the issues at hand to attain their own sense of identity, the consequences for this misalignment are, in adulthood, manifold. There may be an increased risk of mental health illness, relationship difficulties, personality disorders, alcoholism and difficulties fitting in with social groups.

Erikson believed that identity development did not just happen during adolescence, though this clearly was a critical period for identity development, but continued to evolve over nine stages of the life cycle across the lifespan from infancy to very old age. The vast majority of academic discourses surrounding Erikson's oeuvre have largely focused on the fifth stage Identity versus Role Confusion primarily because he identified that it is during adolescence that identity formation is a pivotal concept within the lifespan

to meet the challenges of adulthood. In fact the overwhelming dominance of research within this narrow period of growth and development, has raised concerns from a number of researchers (Côté & Levine, 1987, 2002; Meeus, 1996; van Hoof, 1999), to name but a few to take issue with the research focus on one specific section of the life cycle. The focus on one section of his life cycle, at the expense of the rest of his epigenetic life cycle, is of concern. It is considered to be an error to be so selective because Erikson's epigenetic life cycle was an unfolding narrative of development, growth and adaptation to the multiple psychological, physiological and social challenges which are normal occurrences over a lifespan. Kroger (2002) has identified these three factors which shape an individual's identity as 'tripartite elements'. Kroger also noted that the influence of each of these elements on the sense of identity the 'who I am' shifted across the lifespan in context of the aging process and pertinent psychological and social challenges. So for example the psychological and social elements may be more pertinent or salient during adolescence, but in old age the biological elements may take on a more prominent role due to the significant physiological changes which occur in old age. In turn the physiological changes which occur naturally through the ageing process can also have an impact on social and psychological identity. Individual's needs may dictate that his or her own home is not suitable and so warden or care home housing is required. It is not unreasonable to project that a shift in their social identity may lead to psychological ill-health which in turn can have detrimental effects on their physical health with a high risk of heart disease, strokes and cancer. And so the spiral of ageing can deteriorate downwards. In contrast, the individual may actually enjoy a new sense of shared community and join new friendship or physical activity groups and so the physiological and psychological decline may be halted or even reversed. These elements do not exist mutually exclusive to each other but are part of Erikson's global sense of identity.

In addition, Erikson firmly believed that the temporal-spatial continuity of the ego was so important that he defined it as the *sine qua non* of identity, in other words the indispensible element of identity. For Erikson, it was the sense of sameness, the 'who I am' across the lifespan that existed in conjunction with

personal development and in light of recognition and validation of social relationships and structures. Yet Erikson provided no operationalisation of his theories based upon clinical observation and his writings can be seen as being abstract or florid (Côté & Levine, 1987; Schwartz *et al*, 2009). The dominant operational research model of identity development based around Erikson' theories is Marcia's (1966) identity status model, a quantitative elaboration of Erikson's work. Marcia's (1966) identity status model is based around the two dimensions, central to Erikson's theories, exploration and commitment. Exploration involves the individual challenging their own set of values, goals and beliefs, or actively exploring alternative opinions and values. The net effect of Exploration may not necessarily lead to a change of current identity whereas Commitment refers to adhering to a set of goals and values across the domains. The model is also defined by how individuals utilise Exploration and Commitment in relation to four modes of negotiating identity or identity status and measurement criteria. Individuals are classified according to measurement criteria of exploration and criteria within vocational, ideological and relationship roles and domains such as religious views, political views, opinions on gender roles, relationship roles, sex roles and identity (Côté & Levine, 2002; Kroger & Green, 1996). Thus the statuses are defined as follows: Achievement (Commitment following a period of Exploration); Moratorium (Commitment absent but an on-going process of Exploration); Foreclosure (Commitment present but no process of Exploration that is either on-going or likely to happen in the future); Diffusion (both Exploration and Commitment absent). While it is generally accepted that Diffusion is the lowest identity status and achievement the highest, the positioning of Foreclosure and Moratorium within the identity status hierarchy is neither consistent nor clear. Marcia (1966) suggested that the identity status hierarchy lies along a Diffusion-Foreclosure-Moratorium-Achievement (D-F-M-A) continuum but this concept has been challenged most notably by Berzonsky & Adams (1999); Stephen, Frasier & Marcia (1992); Waterman (1982, 1999) and van Hoof (1999a). Marcia's (1966) operationalisation model of Erikson's theories is by no means an accepted model of identity development, having come under some

serious scrutiny and criticism (for extensive reviews of the statuses see Berzonsky & Adams, 1999; Côté & Levine, 1987, 2002; van Hoof, 1999a, 1999b; Waterman, 1982, 1999).

2.8 Criticisms of Marcia's Operationalisation Model

Among the primary criticisms is the construct validity of the identity status validity, neglecting the *sine qua non* of identity, a temporal-spatial continuity (Côté & Levine, 1988; van Hoof, 1999a). Côté & Levine (1988) argue that to ignore this crucial element of Erikson's theories is a failure to understand and apply Erikson's oeuvre appropriately. Many of these same researchers also take issue with researchers who have accepted Marcia's (1966) operationalisation model as a *fait accompli* concept that fully encompasses Erikson's theories on ego-identity formation and development. As Côté & Levine (1988: 211) have remarked:

 Again we do not think that many observers have taken the view that Marcia's paradigm fails to adequately operationalise Erikson's theory. On the contrary, the continuing legitimacy of the paradigm seems to be contingent upon the presumption that it has a close link with Erikson's perspective.

In addition, (Berzonsky & Adams, 1999; Côté & Levine, 1987, 1988, 2002; van Hoof, 1999a) criticise Marcia's (1966) operationalisation model for its rigid inflexible approach of identity development that prescribes a unidirectional flow from diffusion to the ultimate goal of identity achieved. Indeed it has been argued that Marcia's (1966) model is not a developmental model, but a linear inflexible unidirectional model which does not take fluctuations in status (Bosma & Kunnen, 1991; Goossens, 1995; Waterman 1982, van Hoof, 1999). Goossens (1995) has suggested that individuals maintain a D-M-A pattern before embarking on a cyclical pattern of further exploration of choices i.e. M-A or even D-M-D. van Hoof's (1999a) critique takes particular issue with Marcia's identity status model, raising a charge that it fails to be representative of Erikson's theories on the grounds of construct validity. In particular van Hoof (1999) takes exception to the unidirectional flow D-F-M-A of Marcia's (1966) model, the absence of social contexts and the temporal spatial continuity which are both considered

pivotal to Eriksonian theories. In contrast, Berzonsky & Adams (1999) defend Marcia's model against van Hoof's criticism to suggest that given the sheer magnitude and breadth of Erikson's theories on identity and identity development, it is virtually impossible for any operationalisation model to fully encompass a theoretical construct as wide as this.

I am aware that these discussions may stray deep into territory which is likely to go beyond the scope of this thesis, (for a further discussion on these issues, please see (Berzonsky & Adams,1999; Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Côté & Levine, 1988; Goossens, 1995; Kroger & Marcia, 2012; Meeus, 1996; Meeus *et al* , 1999; Meeus, Iedema & Maassen, 2002; van Hoof 1999a, 199b; Waterman, 1982, 1999)   In addition, further exploration on the arguments relating to the construct validity of the statuses may lose sight of the link between music and identity. The essential point here is that not only is Marcia's operationalisation model strongly associated with adolescent identity development which is not the focus of my quantitative study, but it remains a contentious issue within identity research. I will not be drawn to argue either way on Marcia's (1966) model. But in view of these contentious issues, I stepped back from the maelstrom of argument and counter-argument, to take a broader perspective on the relationship between music preferences and identity to return to Erikson fundamental identity dimensions of Exploration and Commitment. Other researchers have also argued that the two larger dimensions of Exploration and Commitment as more appropriate measurements of identity than the identity statuses alone (e.g. Johnson *et al,* 2007; Meeus, Iedema & Maassen, 2002). In light of the fact that Erikson's theories on identity development had not been quantifiably measured in any previous study, it was of great interest to how the identity dimensions correlated with the other variables. For example, would there be a positive correlation between age and Commitment which may suggest that older persons are either more content or less likely to re-examine their choice of music selection, which may support stability of music preferences (cf. Delsing *et al,* 1998; Holbrook & Schindler, 1989).   Or alternatively, is there a positive correlation with younger persons and Exploration, as they seek

alternatives to their current choices? What is the relationship between these identity dimensions and music preferences? Are these dimensions predictors of taste for certain types of music genres? Are there significant correlations between the identity dimensions and other variables? If music preferences evolve over the lifespan, then is Exploration significantly correlated with age and what are the correlations and predictive power between the other variables such as estimated IQ and personality traits have on ratings for music preferences? On the basis of these unanswered questions which are highly relevant to my research problem, I carried out an on-line quantitative study at Lancaster University in 2010 to explore these relationships and my research questions. In the next chapter I present the main aims and objectives of the quantitative study, research questions, methodology and finally the results and discussion.

Chapter 3. Quantitative study

3.1 Objectives

One of the primary aims of this quantitative study was to replicate and compare recent empirical research (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003 & Zweigenhaft, 2008) with subjects covering a broader age range. I also explored the relationship between music and other individual differences, not covered by either of the previous studies namely identity dimensions and age on the mean ratings of music preferences using Rentfrow and Gosling's STOMP-R (n.d.), an expanded version of their original list of music genres. Although the relationship between identity and music has been established for over thirty years; to the best of my knowledge, no previous research on music preferences has quantifiably measured identity *per se* as an independent variable. In addition, through standard multiple regression analysis, I tested the hypothesis that Erikson's identity dimensions of Commitment and Exploration would be stronger predictors than personality traits in predicting music preferences. It was of interest to see the impact of the identity dimensions on music preferences and whether preference for one music dimension was significantly associated with a particular music dimension. For example, it was hypothesized that the identity dimension Exploration would be positively correlated to the trait Openness and, that both Exploration and Openness would be positively correlated with the Reflective and Complex dimension but negatively correlated with the Upbeat and Conventional dimension. In addition, age would be positively correlated with ratings for Reflective & Complex but negatively correlated for the Intense and Rebellious, Upbeat and Energetic and Rhythmic dimensions.

In addition to my hypothesis that Commitment and Exploration might be predictors of music preferences I also assessed age as a predictor. This addition was to reflect the effect of age and maturation on the identity dimensions and therefore assess the possibility of other important predictor of music preferences beyond the two identity dimensions, personality traits and estimated IQ. It was hypothesized that the Intense and Rebellious and the Upbeat and Conventional dimensions would be negatively correlated and

the Reflective and Complex dimension positively correlated with age. In light of the slightly confusing picture of estimated IQ and music preferences, only two hypotheses were drawn. Firstly that there would be a positive correlation between estimated IQ and both the Reflective and Complex and Intense and Rebellious dimensions and a negative correlation with the Upbeat and Conventional dimension. Therefore for this study because the four statuses were of no concern, I explored the relationship between identity and music preferences, using the Balistreri *et al*, (1995) EIPQ tool which is also based upon the two central tenets of Erikson's (1968) oeuvre on identity, Commitment and Exploration.

To assess for age related differences the population of this study was split into two separate age groups, for further analysis to measure and compare through independent-samples *t*-tests, the mean ratings of younger and older participants (aged 25 years or more) on the four music dimensions. In addition, the on-line study moved beyond correlations to explore through standard multiple regression analysis, the effect and variance these differences have as predictors of music preferences. Results largely supported the findings of both the other studies but there were some crucial differences. Interestingly the results also suggest that, at best, individual difference can only explain about 20% of variance in preference ratings which would indicate that there is much more to learn about the reasons why individuals prefer one style of music over another. However the results also supported my argument that individual preferences alone cannot explain why adolescents and adults alike are drawn to or select certain music styles for a specific function. Thus it is proposed that further enquiry on the social influences such as changing social relationships in conjunction with individual difference and the effects of lifespan experiences is required. The qualitative study (see chapter 6) which followed this study was designed to explore the trajectory of preferences in relation to the impact of lifespan experiences and an evolving identity through maturation.

3.2 Importance of the Big Five

In light of the hegemony of the Big Five within music psychology research, to ignore the Big Five

appeared to be futile and therefore one of the primary aims of this quantitative study was to replicate

previous research, in particular the studies of both Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008).

It was also my aim to expand previous research on music preferences using a wider age range. Therefore,

an explanation of the Big Five, the lexical hypothesis and a discussion on the various Big Five scales will

follow with a brief discussion of the various interpretations of each dimension as suggested by various

researchers. But it must be stated that beyond a brief explanation of the taxonomy and lexical hypothesis

which form the fundamental building blocks of the Big Five; a full historical exploration of how the Big

Five was developed from its infancy and the differing interpretations and classifications of each dimension

by different researchers is considered surplus to requirements (for a full historical review, please see

Block, 1995; John, Naumann, Soto, 2008; John & Srivastava, 1999).

3.3 The Big Five

The Big Five taxonomy is a descriptive framework that was designed to incorporate the numerous

descriptions of human behaviour and attributes commonly known as facets that could be understood

within a single framework using a common everyday use vocabulary to be understood by both

professionals and lay-persons alike (John, Naumann, Soto, 2008; John & Srivastava, 1999; McRae &

John, 1992; Pervin & Cervone, 2010). From the latter half of the twentieth century, the Big Five

taxonomy has undergone several transformations. The Big Five taxonomy is a hierarchical descriptive

framework based around five broad bipolar dimensions namely Extraversion; Agreeableness;

Conscientiousness; Neuroticism and Openness. The term bipolar refers to the fact that each dimension

label holds a corresponding attribute considered in opposition to the label (e.g. Agreeableness versus

Antagonism, Costa & McRae, 1992). These five broad bipolar hierarchical dimensions are simply the

fundamental building blocks of an over-arching model that incorporates the vast multitude of human

characteristics, attributes and descriptions of personality and behaviours encapsulated within everyday

use language, known as the lexical hypothesis. While the dimensions labels are single word terms, below the surface they intrinsically hold a number of specific human cognitive behaviours and attributes that make up the dimensions. It could be said that the elements that make up each dimension are positioned rather like an inverted triangle with the broad terms at the top and the more specific attributes and behaviours related to the different branches of the psychology tree are positioned lower down, although it must be noted that not all interpretations of the dimensions run along similar paths. There are underlying convoluted arguments surrounding the Big Five, namely that each of the five dimensions holds different interpretations according to which Big Five is used within each research problem. Although the broad dimensions are widely accepted the facets that make up each of the Big Five dimensions are subject to different geographical and cultural interpretations. However it is also important to note that because the dimensions within the lexical hypothesis are broad, criticisms have been raised that the dimensions are inherently problematic with researchers applying different criteria to each dimension. Thus the use of everyday language to describe the broad array of human behaviours and personality types may indeed be paradoxically self-limiting. To illustrate this point, some of the facets are not necessarily invariably fixed within one dimension and each dimension may include different facets, according to the researchers' specific research position, thus allowing a shift of lexical emphasis on the interpretations of each dimension. It is perhaps inevitable that the shifting sands of interpretation have raised criticisms from other researchers that the boundaries as set within the lexical approach have become fuzzy, arbitrary, unreliable and de-contextualized concepts (Bandura, 1999; Block, 1995; Pervin, 1994, Pervin & Cervone, 2010). A fuller exploration of the criticisms surrounding the Big Five and wider discussion on the limitations of survey research will be covered in the next chapter as part of my justification for conducting a qualitative study in relation to the development and trajectory of music preferences across the lifespan.

3.4 Lexical Hypothesis

The lexical hypothesis promotes the idea that commonly observed personality traits and salient

characteristics are recognizable and encoded within common use vocabulary of every language, (John,

Naumann, Soto, 2008; John & Srivastava, 1999; McRae & John, 1990). McRae and John (1990: 184)

highlight the biphasic reciprocal relationship between language and personality through the use of the

lexical hypothesis:

The lexical hypothesis holds that all important individual differences will have been noted by speakers of a natural language at

some point in the evolution of the language and encoded in trait terms; by decoding these terms we can discover the basic

dimensions of personality.

The lexical hypothesis is positioned in contrast to the notion that recognition and a shared understanding

of personality traits is only possible through a mutually exclusive academic based language and jargon

(John & Srivastava, 1999). In effect the Big Five can be understood and applied by academic and non-

academic persons alike, though how it is applied is of course another matter. It should be clarified that

the term 'big' is not an indication of its superiority as taxonomy over other types of personality

taxonomy, but a reference pertaining to the breadth of descriptions incorporated within each of the five

dimensions. Consequently, the label of each broad dimension is given to describe several more specific

but loosely connected personality behaviours. For example, under the second dimension Agreeableness,

other adjectives or attributes that may be found under this dimension include pleasant, trustworthy,

kind, whereas the attribute assertive is probably to be found under the first dimension Extraversion.

However if criticisms of fuzzy boundaries are to be leveled at the various conceptual interpretations of

the dimensions, then it is only fair to say that the variety of different scale designs and breadth of scales

available that measure the Big Five may also lead to confusion to all but the most experienced of

researchers.

3.5 Scales

The variety of different design of scales measuring the Big Five is vast and within this thesis it is

considered futile to attempt to discuss them all. Therefore it would seem prudent to discuss the

dominant models within music psychology, though by no means is this list exhaustive. It was also quite

evident that following a literature search on Big Five scales, beyond the methodological research position

adopted by previous researchers within my field of research; a number of practical, financial and legal

considerations also had to be taken into account. These concerned whether the scale was available for

free on the internet or indeed subject to financial penalties or copyright laws. It was made clear from the

outset that the only option available were scales which were free and available in the public domain.

Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) had used John and Srivastava's (1999) Big Five Inventory (BFI) which was a

free public domain scale whereas Zweigenhaft (2008) used the NEO PI-R (Costa & McRae, 1992). The

NEO PI-R which is not in the public domain is a 240-item scale which takes a more nuanced approach to

the Big Five, with six more facets ascribed to each factor. Other alternative free web based public

domain scales were the IPIP (Goldberg, 1992) and Saucier's (1994) Mini-markers though to the best of

my knowledge, neither had been used in research exploring the relationship between personality traits

and music preferences. Both of these scales were rejected because to create a stronger argument, one of

the primary aims of my research was to replicate and expand previous research. The BFI scale (John &

Srivastava, 1999) was available for free and available on the internet so little could be gained by deviating

away from the earlier research methodology. In addition, to the considerations of previous research,

logistical considerations of an on-line survey were equally important and so the test had to be simple and

not time consuming in order to avoid participant fatigue (Gosling *et al*, 2003; John & Srivastava, 1999).

Costa and McRae's (1992) NEO PI-R according to Zweigenhaft (2008) takes approximately 45 minutes

to an hour to complete, which is considered too lengthy by some (Gosling *et al*, 2003; John & Srivastava,

1999). Costa and McRae (1992) also designed the shorter 60-item NEO-Five Factor Inventory (NEO-

FFI) scale, which is significantly correlated with the larger NEO PI-R scale. However both the NEO PI-R

and the NEO-FFI were rejected because of copyright law and associated financial implications. In contrast, the BFI was not only much quicker at around 5 minutes to complete and as stated earlier it was available on the internet at no financial cost.

3.6 The BFI

The BFI is a short 44-item inventory that primarily explores the five dimensions at the broad end of the inverted triangle without delving deep into the individual facets of each dimension. According to John and Srivastava (1999), the five dimensions cover a variety of personal and social cognitive patterns. In their opinion, multiple words in addition to the label title add more context and associations, than the single title labels alone. So for example the authors prefer the following labels for the five dimensions (pp. 30-31):

- (E) Extraversion, Energy, Enthusiasm.

- (A) Agreeableness, Altruism, Affection.

- (C) Conscientiousness, Control, Constraint.

- (N) Neuroticism, Negative Affectivity, Nervousness.

- (O) Openness, Originality, Open-Mindedness.[6]

As noted earlier the dimensions are bipolar so that an individual who score high on one dimension is expected to display consistent traits of that dimension, whereas low scores on the dimension would suggest that the individual is expected to display traits in polar opposite of the title label (Dunn *et al*, 2011). Thus a low score in the Agreeableness dimension would suggest patterns of cognitive behaviour that may be construed as aggressive, antagonistic and unpleasant.

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[6]John & Srivastava (1999) correctly identify that the first letter of each dimension (EACNO) is an anagram of the word OCEAN. This is true, but if the letters are rearranged once again the letters also spell an alternative word, CANOE. I have no doubt that there are others who may enquire further into the apparent associations between the Big Five personality traits and all things aquatic; but for now I shall withhold from engaging in that particular task of lateral thinking. In addition if allowed to split the letters to form two words alternatives are; card games: NO ACE; ice cream: A CONE; poetic beating headmasters: O CANE; beginning of Waltzing Matilda: ONCE A

3.7 Measuring Identity

As noted earlier, Marcia (1966) identified that the two dimensions of Commitment and Exploration connected the identity statuses. As noted earlier for this on-line quantitative study, the four identity statuses were not of interest because the epistemological concept or definition of identity deployed throughout this thesis is an over-arching global sense of identity. Overall scores of the Exploration and Commitment dimensions are considered to be more appropriate measures of identity than the four individual identity statuses as recommended by other researchers (Johnson *et al*, 2007; Meeus, Iedema & Maassen, 2002; Waterman, 1999). Another reason for not examining identity at the status level is that there are often inconsistencies at three main levels, within the individual, with the agreed content of each status and at the developmental stage of each status level. Although intra-individual variations in identity status across the domains are to be expected; it is also important to avoid over-generalisation even if identity is measured at the broader objective Commitment-Exploration level. Abstraction from the status does not necessarily equate to stability across the domains, for example Zimmermann *et al*, (2010) and Schwartz *et al* (2009) have drawn caution to assume that within the identity status model, equal levels of Commitment and Exploration apply across all domains. An illustration of inter-domain instability may highlight the issues of concern. For example, a university student may be foreclosed in the religious domain, but in moratorium with regards to their political beliefs as they become exposed to a wider spectrum of political views than perhaps was previously so, within the home environment (cf. Meeus *et al*, 1999). It should also be recognized that self-presentation within various domains is an on-going process and subject to change through self exploration. Thus to ask individuals to self-report their current status is considered an unreliable measurement of current or past commitments and self-explorations as these do not fully explain variations in identity development nor identify progressive nor regressive changes. Secondly there is no clear agreement on the exact content or developmental process involved for each status. In view of the disagreement on the number and type of domains that contribute to a global sense of identity, disagreement on the exact timing of identity development (Meeus, 1996;

Meeus *et al,* 1999; Porfeli *et al*, 2011; Waterman, 1999), data for the four identity statuses were collated but neither analysed nor interpreted for this thesis. To explore and measure different domain-specific identities, each potentially displaying a different status and in turn fluctuating across the lifespan may paint a rather confusing picture which appears to contradict Erikson's concept of a unified identity structure during adolescence (Berzonsky & Adams, 1999). In addition, Erikson's theories stress the importance of social contexts in relation to identity development, but it is argued here that a focus on status measurements would fail to take into account the impact of social contexts. Consequently, only the mean dimension scores on Exploration and Commitment were included in the analyses.

Methodology

3.8 Measurements of personality (Appendix A)

Personality traits including Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness were measured using the 44-item BFI (John & Srivastava, 1999). The BFI is a questionnaire consisting of short statements that are based upon the Big Five. Participants were requested to rate their levels of agreement on the statements on a Likert type scale, ranging from (1) Strongly Agree to (6) Strongly Disagree. Reliability for the BFI is measured at .83. Confirmatory Factor Analysis has demonstrated high standardized coefficient validity for the BFI α=.92 (John & Srivastava, 1999). For this study the Cronbach reliability scores for each of the five personality traits were as follows: Extraversion α= .876, Agreeableness α= .792, Conscientiousness α= .834, Neuroticism α= .842 and for Openness α= .809.

3.9 Identity dimension measurement (Appendix B)

Identity status measurement was calculated using the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ) (Balistreri, Buschnagel & Geisinger, 1995). The EIPQ is a 32-item questionnaire based upon Marcia's (1966) identity status model in which participants are asked to rate their agreement on a Likert type scale against four ideological domains (political views, occupation, religion and values) and four interpersonal domains (friendship, dating, gender and recreation). This tool was selected because it provided separate

Exploration and Commitment scores rather than an amalgamation of the two. As noted earlier, although the four identity statuses were measured and available for data analysis, but they were of no interest at this stage, though they could be analysed in the future for research analysis. Although it was possible to bifurcate both the identity dimensions of Commitment and Exploration to provide the four identity statuses, my analysis and management of the data examined the relationship between the two identity dimensions, the Big Five, estimated IQ and age. The eight interpersonal and ideological domains as listed above were considered surplus to requirements in favour of a broader view of identity. The EIPQ is divided into two halves with 16 items measuring identity exploration and the remaining 16 items measuring identity commitment. The internal consistency estimates for this study were $\alpha=.80$ for Commitment and $\alpha=.86$ for Exploration.

3.10 Measuring IQ (Appendix C)

The estimated average level of IQ in the UK is 100. The results from this study show that the estimated IQ ranged from 84 to 119 (X= 110, SD= 5.18). As this was an on-line study with no face to face contact with the participants, a pre-morbid assessment tool (Barona *et al*, 1984) was used to calculate the estimated IQ. The estimated IQ is calculated according to an individual's demographic data such as age, race, occupation, place of residence and education. Calculation of estimated IQ was measured from the following formula:

Estimated IQ= (54.96 + (.47 * Age category) + (1.76 * Sex) + (4.71 * Race category) + (5.02 * Education) + (1.89 * Occupation) + (.59 * Residency)).

Research has shown that without prior knowledge of the individual's measured IQ, the pre-morbid assessment method falls largely in line with the standardized IQ assessment tools such as the revised Wechler Adult Intelligence Score tool (WAIS-R; Wechler, 1981) (Axelrod, Vanderploeg & Schinka, 1999; Krull, Scott & Sherer, 1995; Powell *et al,* 2003; Vanderploeg & Schinka, 1995; Vanderploeg, Schinka & Axelrod, 1996). However, this method of IQ assessment is not universally accepted. The

counter-argument is that pre-morbid IQ assessment tools are inconsistent and that there is some

evidence to suggest that when the IQ scores from a pre-morbid assessment tool were compared with a

standardized IQ assessment tools, pre-morbid assessment tools were liable for a meanward regression of

IQ, particular for scores at the upper ranges >120 (Basso *et al*, 2000); or display under and

overestimation of IQ scores (Griffin *et al*, 2002). As it was an on-line study and the main reason to

measure IQ was to examine the relationship between IQ and music preferences, the Barona *et al*, (1984)

pre-morbid assessment tool was considered not only to be the most appropriate and practical tool

available, but it was also selected for its simplicity. Future research may include a subsample to undergo

standardized IQ assessment tools and to compare those results with these found in this study and

examine the specific cluster patterns for both the younger and older participants and explore the degrees

of variation.

3.11 Age categories

To measure the relationship between age and music preferences, age category was used rather than exact

age. The decision to use age categories was based upon two factors, to compare the findings of this study

with previous research arguments and the estimated pre-morbid IQ assessment tool (Barona *et al*, 1984),

cited above. As discussed earlier, the argument that there may be a degree of crystallisation of music

preferences around the age of 24 years of age (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989; Delsing *et al*, 2008; Mulder

et al, 2008) is not widely accepted, but it was considered useful to compare the findings of this study with

previous research. There are nine age designated categories on the pre-morbid estimated IQ tool (16-17;

18-19; 20-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65-69; 70-74). As there is a clear demarcation line at the age

of 24 in the third category, this was considered a useful and reliable tool to compare and examine the

differences between younger participants (17-24 years; n=578) and older aged participants (25-66 years;

n=185).

3.12 Music preferences (Appendix D)

Music preferences were measured using Rentfrow and Gosling's (n.d.) revised Short Test of Music

Preference (STOMP-R), taken from their own homepage

[http://homepage.psy.utexas.edu/homepage/faculty/gosling/scales we.htm]. STOMP-R, is an

extension of their original music preference scale, contains 23 music genres rather than the original 14

genres from which participants rate their preferences for each of the genres on a Likert type scale from

(1) Dislike Strongly to (7) Like Strongly. The mean coefficient alpha score for reliability has been

measured at α=.68. Separate reliability analyses were run for each of the four music genre that

constitute Rentfrow & Gosling's (n.d.) STOMP-R. The Cronbach's α scores for each genre were as

follows: Reflective and Complex α= .75; Intense and Rebellious α= .73; Upbeat and Conventional α=

.70; and Energetic and Rhythmic α=. 70.

3.13 Questionnaire

Participants

An e-mail advert was sent out to all undergraduate and post graduate students at Lancaster University

inviting participants to take part in the on-line study exploring the relationship between music

preferences and individual differences. The advert was also placed on the social media network site

Facebook and in the university staff newsletter. Through random and snowball sampling, the initial total

achieved was 898 participants. In view of the large sample, only participants who had fully completed

their survey were included for data analysis and interpretation (n=763), giving an uptake of 85%. The

sample included 489 females (64.1%) and 274 (35.9%) males. Age ranged from 17 years to 66 years

(X=23.9; *SD* = 8.97). The number of participants aged 24 years or younger was 578 (75.8%), those

aged 25 years and over was 185 (24.2%). Racial breakdown was as follows: Black 12 (1.6%), Other 92

(12.1%) and White 659 (86.4%).

Results and Discussion

3.14 Age & demographics

As expected, the vast majority of the population age ranges fell within the norms of student age ranges, between 17 and 24 years, n=578 (75.8%). On comparing the mean scores between younger and older adults, an age of 24 years was selected to define the upper age limit of the younger adult age group. As noted earlier, the decision to use the upper limit of 24 years for comparison and data analysis was based upon two factors, to compare my findings with previous arguments which propose a degree of crystallisation of music preferences around this age and the pre-morbid estimated IQ tool (Barona *et al*, 1984). Secondly, the older age range groupings in Zweigenhaft (2008) as noted below were delineated from the age of 23 years onwards. On comparison, the one year overlap between that study and this was considered too small to be of any significance. Compared to the other two studies, no age ranges are supplied by Rentfrow and Gosling (2003), except to say that the population was made up of undergraduates and so it is assumed but not verified that the majority of participants were aged comparatively to those in the younger age group in this study. The number of participants aged 23 years and older in the Zweigenhaft (2008) study was n=14 (16.9%). Whereas in this study, the population of participants aged 25 years or more was n=185 (24.2%), a significantly larger population and therefore of higher statistical power and significance.
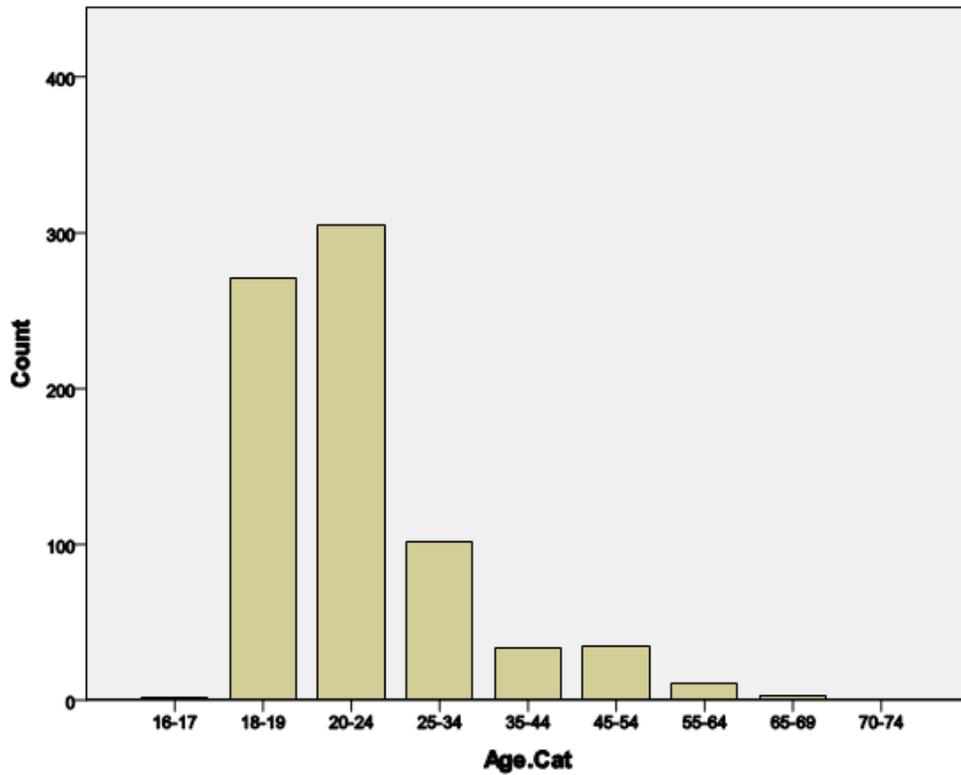
Figure 2. Population age ranges (n=763)

Gender

Independent-samples *t*-tests were carried out to identify any significant gender differences in the mean ratings for the four music dimensions. Only in the Upbeat and Conventional dimension was any significant effect found with a moderate effect found in the mean ratings between men and women; men (X=4.07, SD=1.01) and women (X=4.62, SD=.9); t (761) =7.78, $p=$ <.01 (two tailed); Effect r =.07. Significant but very small differences were found in the other dimensions. In light of these findings, no further analysis of the effects of gender was carried out.

Table 1.1 A Comparison of the correlations between the Big Five and the four music dimensions of this study (RL) against two other studies.

Big Five	Reflective & Complex			Intense & Rebellious			Upbeat & Conventional			Energetic & Rhythmic		
	RL	R&G	Z	RL	R&G	Z	RL	R&G	Z	RL	R&G	Z
Extraversion	.03	.01 -.02	.00	-.03	.00 .08*	-.04	.14***	.24* .15*	.09	.26***	.22*/.19*	.22*
Agreeableness	.13***	.01 .03	.09	.04	-.04 .01	-.03	.20***	.23**	.13	.15***	.08* .09*	-.07
Conscientiousness	.01	-.02 -.06	-.01	-.12**	-.04 -.03	-.1	.14***	.15* .18*	.23	-.04	.00 -.03	-.12
Neuroticism	.02	-.08* -04	-.18	-.03	.01 .01	-.11	.02	.07 .04	.09	-.09*	-.01	.02
Openness	.35***	.44* .41*	.35*	.17***	.18* .15*	.15	.00	-.14* -.08*	-.36	.02	.03 .04	.32*

R&G= Rentrfow & Gosling (studies 2 & 3, 2003) * *p*< .05

Z= Zweigenhaft (2008) * *p*< .05

RL: * *p*< .05. ** *p*< .01. *** *p*< .001 (two tailed)

The results shown in Table 1.1 demonstrate some very interesting correlations between the four music dimensions and personality traits. Comparison of the results in this study between music preferences and personality traits against those of the Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008) studies respectively, demonstrate general support but there are some major distinctions. The higher levels of significance in some cases are to be expected from the greater numbers of subjects in this study, and there is clear agreement in the correlations between Openness and preference for Reflective and Complex music and for Intense and Rebellious music. There was also a consistent positive correlation

between Extraversion, and Energetic and Rhythmic music and Upbeat and Conventional music, (though this last was not found in Zweigenhaft's results). In addition, a significant positive correlation was found between Agreeableness and both the Upbeat and Conventional and the Energetic and Rhythmic dimensions, in line with Rentfrow and Gosling, (2003); again neither of these results was a significant finding in the Zweigenhaft study, (2008). In fact, Zweigenhaft (2008) found a negative but not significant relationship between Agreeableness and the Energetic and Rhythmic dimension.

Significant correlations were found here between Agreeableness and Reflective and Complex, and a significant negative correlation between Conscientiousness scores and Intense and Rebellious. Interestingly neither Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) nor Zweigenhaft's study (2008) found any significant correlation and were only hinted at in their results. A significant negative relationship between Conscientiousness and the Intense & Rebellious dimension was not totally unexpected, given the title of the dimension. The lyrical and thematic content of this music, (Heavy Metal, Rock, Alternative and Punk) has frequent references to notions of defiance, calls to challenge the establishment, or to reject the supposed constraints of responsibility as handed down by figures of authority such as the school, police or the government (Arnett, 1995; Bleich, Zillman & Weaver, 1991; Frith 1983).

Two divergent results were a weakly significant negative correlation between Neuroticism and Energetic
& Rhythmic, where both Rentfrow and Gosling and Zweigenhaft found no correlation, and a zero
correlation between Openness and Upbeat and Conventional (confirmed by examination of a scatter
plot-Appendix E) where both Rentfrow and Gosling and Zweigenhaft found significant negative
correlations. Although Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) found a significant negative correlation between
Neuroticism and Reflective and Complex music, other results revealed a positive but non-significant
correlation, supported by Delsing *et al*, (2008). A correlation analysis was performed between the music
dimensions and the other variables not measured by either study, namely identity dimensions, age and
estimated IQ as listed in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Correlations between the four music dimensions, identity

dimensions, age and IQ

Big Five	Reflective & Complex	Intense & Rebellious	Upbeat & Conventional	Energetic & Rhythmic
Commitment	**-.04**	**.04**	**.04**	**-.05**
Exploration	**.23*****	**.07***	**.08***	**.04**
Age	**.27****	**-.08***	**.02**	**.05**
Estsimated IQ	**.08**	**.06**	**-.10****	**-.09***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two tailed)

Interestingly, no significant relationship was evident between Commitment and any of the four music

dimensions. Both Rentfrow & Gosling's (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008) identified that a significant negative

correlation existed between Openness and high mean preference ratings for the Upbeat and Conventional

dimension; consequently, it was predicted that there would be a positive correlation between Commitment and

this music dimension, clearly this was not so.   In addition, it was proposed that not only would there be a

positive correlation between Commitment and the Upbeat and Conventional dimension, but there would also

be a negative correlation with Exploration. In fact, a significant positive correlation was found between this

music and Exploration. The reasons behind this difference with previous research are not necessarily obvious.

Variation in age is not necessarily the answer as the correlation between age and this music dimension is

virtually negligible. The reason for the disparity in the results may in fact be due to cross-cultural differences in

relation to both music and socio-political culture, as supported by previous research (Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*,

2009; Delsing *et al*, 2008). It is noteworthy that both the Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008)

studies were carried out in the southern states of the USA, in Texas and North Carolina respectively which fall

within an area informally called the 'Bible belt'. This notional area covers most of the central southern and

south eastern states of the USA. Broadly speaking, individuals who live in this area have a tendency to hold

strong evangelical Protestant Christian faith values, tend to be rather conservative and have strong

unquestioning opinions on their faith on socio-political issues such as abortion and homosexuality. Interestingly,

Zweigenhaft (2008) used the 240-item NEO PI-R (Costa & McRae, 1992) tool which includes the thirty facets

for each trait for a more nuanced assessment of personality. When Zweigenhaft (2008) ran a correlation analysis

between the 21 individual music styles (two genres were excluded from the STOMP-R) and the facets for each

personality trait, they found that there was a strong negative correlation between Openness and religious music

and the strongest negative relationship between the facets and religious music was 'values'. Costa & McRae

(1992) define the facet 'Openness to Values', as a willingness to re-examine and explore one's social, political

and religious values.   Therefore if there is a strong probability that individuals from the 'Bible belt' hold strong

fixed socio-political and religious beliefs and that religious music, country, and gospel are popular styles of

music in this area; it would appear perhaps unsurprising that there was a strong negative correlation between Openness and the Upbeat and Conventional dimension. Zweigenhaft's (2008: 54) comments clearly underline the link between the dominance of the conservative socio-political and religious views with the cultural contexts:

 North Carolina is in what is often called "the Bible belt" and those who are religious in North Carolina-at least those who indicate that they like religious music- appear not only to be sure of their faith, but not prone to question their views or seek out alternative perspectives'.

The implicit references to high levels of Commitment and low levels of Exploration are obvious. This observation would suggest that a large number of residents from this area would be classified into the foreclosed status in Marcia's (1968) identity status model. That is to say that these individuals obtain their values and belief systems as young adolescents from organisations of authority such as the church and unquestioningly rigidly adhere to maintain the prescribed status quo. Religious music, country and bluegrass play a larger part of popular and social culture in the USA and in particular the southern states, than here in the UK. That is not to say that this music is not a popular music style in the UK country, but in the southern states of the USA these music genres and other affiliated styles, remain a consistently popular music styles of that are played far more frequently on the airwaves as mainstream music than here in the UK. Therefore it is possible that these socio-political and cultural differences may explain why both Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008) both found significant negative correlations between Openness and Upbeat and Conventional dimension as opposed to a zero relationship in this study. In fact, significant positive, rather than a negative correlation was found between Exploration and both the Upbeat and Conventional and Intense and Rebellious dimensions.

The strongest correlation between identity and music dimensions was between Exploration and the Reflective and Complex dimension. This finding is perhaps not surprising in light of the strong correlation between this music dimension and Openness found in this study and echoed in the other studies. Both Openness and Exploration share a degree of lexical meaning and common attributes that exist comfortably between these two

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variables. Indeed, an additional correlation analysis (see below, table 1.3) was carried out between the Big Five and the identity dimensions as well as estimated IQ and age. This analysis revealed a highly significant positive correlation between Exploration and Openness. These results support previous research (Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham, 2007; Rentfrow and Gosling, 2003; Zweigenhaft, 2008) that individuals who are open to new ideas and are willing to explore alternatives prefer complex music such as classical music and jazz   The significant positive correlation between Age and Reflective and Complex music and the negative correlation with Intense and Rebellious music was as expected.

Table 1.3 Correlations between the Big Five,

identity dimensions, age and estimated IQ.

Big Five Inventory	Commitment	Exploration	Age	Estimated IQ
Extraversion	.20***	.05	.09*	.05
Agreeableness	.13**	.04	.04	.03
Conscientiousness	.26***	.02	.24***	.14**
Neuroticism	-.14***	.08*	-.08*	-.08*
Openness	.04	.36***	.22***	.17**

p< .05. ** *p*< .01. *** *p*< .001 (two tailed)

Both Extraversion and Agreeableness correlated with Commitment respectively. A significant negative correlation was found in Neuroticism and Commitment and only a weak positive correlation with Exploration. Significantly positive correlations were found between Conscientiousness and both Commitment and Age which was expected and may reflect the natural trend through maturation to engage less in reckless behaviour, commit oneself to a partner, career and settle down. However the significant positive correlation between Exploration and Age, would suggest that our choices are not necessarily static and may go through a period of reflection to determine if these are the most appropriate, salient choices and therefore may be subject to change to either internal changes or through external forces such as social or historical events (Erikson, 1968; Fadjukoff *et al*, 2010; Stephen *et al*, 1992). In turn this significant finding also raises considerable doubt on the argument for stasis in the trajectory of music preferences. However before any firm conclusions could be made, further analyses were required.

Previous research has suggested that individuals who have a higher IQ are more likely to prefer complex music, as their choice of music fulfils a need to be challenged (Bourdieu, 1984; Bryson, 1996; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007, Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2009; Peterson & Kern, 1996; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; Snibbe & Markus, 2005; van Eijck, 2001). Therefore it was hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between the Reflective and Complex dimension and estimated IQ; and conversely a negative correlation with less complex music styles as evident in the Upbeat and Conventional dimension such as gospel, country and western and popular music. The negative correlation between estimated IQ and Upbeat and Convention music ($r= -.10$, $p< .01$) and Energetic & Rhythmic ($r= .09$, $p< .05$) was interesting as it partially supports previous research that individuals with lower IQ and lower educational status prefer music that is less complex with smoother harmonic sequences and overall less challenging music (Bourdieu, 1984; Bryson, 1996; Peterson & Kern, 1996; Snibbe & Marcus, 2005; van Eijck, 2001). Bryson (1996) also suggested that fans of heavy metal were

also associated with lower educational status which is not borne out here and nor is it evident in either Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) or Zweigenhaft (2008). Indeed both the other two studies found significant positive correlations with mean ratings for Intense and Rebellious music, the broad dimension under which heavy metal falls, for both self views of intelligence and cognitive testing of IQ and end of course grades. As is evident in this study, a non-significant positive relationship was found between estimated IQ and this dimension. However the most surprising result is that while estimated IQ was positively related to the Reflective and Complex dimension, it was not a significant relationship as expected. This finding is interesting because it goes against current research which suggests that there is a high probability that individuals who like complex music (i.e. classical music, jazz, and blues) are likely to have higher levels of intelligence and select their music to fulfill a high level cognitive function (Bourdieu, 1984; Bryson, 1996; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007; Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2009, 2010; Hargreaves & North, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Snibbe & Marcus, 2005; van Eijck, 2001). In light of the anomalies and low levels of correlation and significance, no further analysis as carried out on estimated IQ but future research may wish to explore this relationship in greater depth than covered here in this thesis The anomalies do raise important questions about the relationship between intelligence and music preferences, but there is one important issue that may partially explain the variations in the results that lies outside of individual differences which is significantly affected by geographical, temporal and cultural differences, namely genre interpretation. I will return shortly to this point, because it is an extremely important issue that has implications for future research, but for now further analysis of my data was required to explore the power of both age and identity as predictors of music preferences. Therefore I expanded beyond the simple correlation relationship between individual differences and music preferences to explore this relationship at a linear level, through standard multiple regression analysis.

3.15 Standard multiple regression analysis

In order to explore the contributory effect of each independent variable, a standard multiple regression analysis was performed to compare which of the independent variables out of personality traits, identity dimensions and age were best at predicting preference for the four music dimensions. Not only was it of interest to see which was the best predictor of preferences, but also how large the effect was for each variable and to identify any recurrent consistency between the variables and music dimensions. Four separate simple regression analyses were performed with each of the music dimensions set as the dependent variable, and each of the five personality traits, the two identity dimensions and age as independent variables. To check for outliers within each model, the standard residual (-3.3 to 3.3) was set, and the number of outliers did not exceed 5% (n=763). No missing data or suppressor variables were identified. Evidence for multicollinearity was checked, and tolerance and VIF values were satisfactory, >.1 & <10 respectively. Only predictors with a significance level of $p<.05$ or less were included in the final table. The independent variables are listed in order of their effect with each music dimension. The results are set out in table 1.4 (below). A full table of all the results for the simple regression analyses and the independent-samples t-tests can be found in the appendices.

The most striking thing about these results is the generally low values for the adjusted R^2 scores. At best, these individual differences account for less than 20% of the variance in music preferences, which would suggest that there are many other factors that are as yet unexplained. However, comparison of the standardized scores measuring the contributory effect on preference scores, revealed some interesting findings. No single predictor stands out as having a significantly large contributory effect on preference ratings across all music dimensions but it is noted that the Big Five traits are robust predictors of music preferences.

3.16 Age and identity as predictors of music preferences

Multiple standard multiple regression analyses were performed to explore different predictive

relationships between the different independent variables on the music dimensions and any differences

between the two age groups. Using the age categories as defined from the pre-morbid estimated IQ

assessment tool, the two age groups were split between those aged up to 24 years against those aged 25

years and older. It was of great interest to determine if Exploration and Commitment scores supported

the notion for a crystallisation of taste (e.g. Holbrook & Schindler, 1989), or for a shift in the trajectory

of music preferences (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013).   The analyses were also useful to identify

significant variations in the scores in personality traits, identity dimensions and preferences which may be

attributable to age related differences. Only the major significant findings will be presented. Again the

results largely support and expand the work of both Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft

(2008), but with some surprising findings.

Table 1.4 Standard multiple regression analysis to predict preference ratings for each music dimension, using the Big Five, identity dimensions and age as predictors (n=763).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	B	t	P
Reflective and Complex	Openness	.35	.05	.27	7.24	<.001
	Age	.22	.00	.22	6.29	<.001
	Agreeableness	.16	.05	.12	3.48	<.01
	Exploration	.01	.00	.01	2.68	<.01

Note: Adjusted R²= .18, F (8,754) = 22.07, p< .001

Intense & Rebellious	Openness	.37	.07	.20	4.93	<.001
	Conscientiousness	-.19	.07	-.11	-2.84	<.01
	Age	-.01	.01	-.09	-2.53	<.05

Note: Adjusted R²= .05, F (8,754) = 6.07, p< .001

Upbeat & Conventional	Agreeableness	.28	.05	.20	5.23	<.001
	Extraversion	.14	.04	.13	3.34	<.01
	Neuroticism	.14	.04	.13	3.32	<.01
	Exploration	.01	.00	.09	2.23	<.05
	Conscientiousness	.11	.05	.08	2.18	<.05
	Openness	-.12	.06	-.08	-2.11	<.05

Note: Adjusted R²= .07, F (8,754) = 8.08, p< .001

Energetic & Rhythmic	Extraversion	.43	.06	.28	7.36	<.001
	Agreeableness	.27	.08	.14	3.61	<.001
	Conscientiousness	-.19	.07	-.10	-2.64	<.01
	Commitment	-.01	.01	-.09	2.30	<.05

Note: Adjusted R²= Adjusted R²=.09, F (8,754) =10.73, p< .001

Table 1.5 Standard multiple regression analysis to predict preference ratings for each music dimension in the age group 17-24 years (n=578).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	B	t	P
Reflective and Complex	Openness	.39	.06	.29	6.72	<.001
	Exploration	.01	.01	.12	2.75	<.01
	Conscientiousness	-.13	.05	-.10	-2.50	<.05
	Agreeableness	.13	.05	.10	2.37	<.05

Note: Adjusted R^2= .14, F (7,570) = 14.55, p< .001

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	B	t	P
Intense & Rebellious	Openness	.32	.09	.16	3.64	<.001
	Conscientiousness	-.22	.08	-.13	-3.00	<.01

Note: Adjusted R^2= .05, F (7,570) = 5.31, p< .001

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	B	t	P
Upbeat & Conventional	Agreeableness	.24	.06	.17	4.02	<.001
	Neuroticism	.17	.05	.16	3.52	<.001
	Extraversion	.13	.05	.13	2.84	<.01
	Exploration	.01	.01	.09	2.08	<.05

Note: Adjusted R^2=.08, F (7,570) =6.97, p< .001.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	B	t	P
Energetic & Rhythmic	Extraversion	.41	.07	.27	6.15	<.001
	Agreeableness	.30	.09	.15	3.45	<.01
	Conscientiousness	-.23	.08	-.12	-2.81	<.01

Note: Adjusted R^2=.08, F (7,570) =8.51, p< .001

Table 1.6 Standard multiple regression analysis to predict preference ratings for each music dimension in the age group 25-66 years (n=185).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	B	t	P
Reflective and Complex	Openness	.24	.09	.21	2.78	<.01
	Agreeableness	.20	.09	.17	2.18	<.05
Note: Adjusted R^2= .09, F (7,177) = 3.47, p< .01						
Intense & Rebellious	Openness	.45	.15	.24	3.05	<.01
Note: Adjusted R^2= .03, F (7,177) = 1.82, p>.05 (ns)						
Upbeat & Conventional	Agreeableness	.39	.11	.27	3.51	<.01
	Openness	-.33	.11	-.23	-3.09	<.01
Note: Adjusted R^2=.10, F (7,177) =4.05 p< .001.						
Energetic & Rhythmic	Extraversion	.49	.12	.32	4.00	<.001
Note: Adjusted R^2=.10, F (7,177) =3.81, p < .01						

3.17 Identity dimensions to predict music preferences

The generally low levels of significance of both Commitment and Exploration to predict music preferences were disappointing. Both the studies carried out by Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008) found that a preference for Upbeat and Conventional music is associated with conservative self-views, eschewing liberal ideology or rejecting consideration of alternative viewpoints. Therefore, it was hypothesized that negative scores on Exploration in conjunction with positive scores on Commitment would be significant, but the hypothesis was not supported. Regression analysis revealed that for preferences for Upbeat and Conventional music, Exploration was a significant positive not a negative predictor as expected which is consistent with the earlier correlation analysis. In addition, Commitment was not a significant predictor which was unexpected. These results clearly differ from both the Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) and the Zweigenhaft (2008) studies, where significant negative correlations were found between Upbeat and Conventional music and Openness.

Openness and Exploration as positive predictors for Reflective and Complex music respectively were expected given the strong positive correlations identified earlier between this identity dimension and Openness. This supports previous research which has suggested that individuals who give high ratings to complex music are more likely to be stimulated but are open-minded to a breadth of ideas and different cultures, and who enjoy engaging with difficult art forms and complex ideas (Bourdieu; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007, Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2009, 2012; North & Hargreaves, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Peterson & Kern, 1992; Peterson & Simkus, 1992; Rentfrow & Gosling 2003, Zweigenhaft, 2008).

The Energetic and Rhythmic music dimension is perhaps less easy to analyse. Extraversion was a very strong predictor followed by Agreeableness, but both Commitment and Conscientiousness were significant negative predictors. These results appear to suggest that individuals who give high ratings to

this music are gregarious, sociable pleasant and unreserved who are less worried about their responsibilities and 'doing the right thing'. In a negative light, these same individuals may also be seen as self-centred, frivolous, irresponsible and over-bearing. Yet the reasons behind why individuals who share these individual differences prefer this type of music, clearly requires further examination. Age does not appear to be a factor as it is not a significant predictor for the whole population and neither is it a factor even when the age groups were bifurcated into younger and older age groups. The answer may lie in the genesis of the music genres. Arguably, four of the five genres that make up this dimension (funk, rap/hip-hop, reggae and Soul/R&B) are largely made up of music that may be considered as music of black origin, the exception being dance/electronica. However further investigation and exploration of the data in relation to racial category and personality typology is beyond the scope of this thesis primarily because of the design of the demographic data form. There were only three different types of racial categories available on the demographic data form (white, other and black). These three categories were solely used for the estimation of IQ assessment tool. It is accepted that the term 'other' is rather ambiguous and to reduce the broad array of ethnicity into just three categories is self-limiting. Consequently, this is why no further analysis has been made in relation to the relationship between race and music preference, but further research may explore this relationship in greater detail and in fact, go beyond self-descriptions of ethnicity to examine the influence of cultural experiences on the trajectory of the music taste palate.

3.18 Age Differences

Analysis also reveals that levels of significance in relation to the identity dimensions are not always consistent across the age groups. When I compared the Commitment and Exploration scores for each of the age groups were compared using independent-samples t-tests, older participants demonstrated significantly higher scores for both identity dimensions than the younger participants. For the Commitment dimension, $Mean_{Comm>=25years} = 61.39$, SD10.41, $t = 2.21$ ($df = 761$), $p < .01$, 95% CI .20 to 3.41, though the magnitude of the effect was small ($r = .08$). The scores for the Exploration dimension

show similar results with only a small magnitude of effect, $\text{Mean}_{\text{Expl}>=25\text{years}=}$ 62.36, SD 10.15, $t = 2.86$ (df= 267), p < .01, 95% CI .73 to 3.98 (r=.17). These results appear to support the notion that for some adults, identity choices are not a fixed phenomenon. If there had been significantly higher Exploration scores for the younger age group and higher Commitment scores for the older age group, then this would suggest that in later years, tastes and choices pertaining to one's identity become fixed after a period of searching and repositioning of one's identity. However these results do not support that notion. Although the higher levels of Commitment in the older age group would suggest that there is a degree of consolidation in response to maturation, this is not matched by lower levels of Exploration. In fact, as is evident quite the opposite has been found. The higher levels of Exploration in the older age group also appear to suggest that for some older individuals, choices are not static but under constant scrutiny and re-examination. These results support Erikson's (1968) notion that through a continual interplay of the two identity dimensions, identity development remains active throughout the lifespan as individuals (re-) examine and (re-)consolidate their choices in response to the psycho-social challenges of maturation (Erikson, 1950, 1968; Fadjukoff, 2010; Stephen *et al*, 1992).

Analysis also reveals that levels of significance are not always consistent across the age groups. For example, Openness was a significant predictor across both age groups for all music dimensions except for the Energetic and Rhythmic music. In addition, for younger participants who expressed preferences for Upbeat and Conventional music, Openness was not a predictor. Agreeableness was also a significant predictor across the four music dimensions except for Intense and Rebellious music and older participants who expressed preferences for Energetic and Rhythmic music. To compare the mean ratings of the two separate age groups on the music dimensions, independent-samples *t*-tests were carried out. Results demonstrate that significance was achieved only in the Reflective and Complex dimension with older participants, those aged 25 years or more, giving higher ratings than the younger participants: $\text{Mean}_{>=25\text{years}}$ = 4.79, SD.081, t=7.61, (df=761) p<.001, 95% CI .41 to .70. The

magnitude of the effect was moderate ($r=.07$). This suggests that significant age differences were found in this dimension alone, but this does not exclude the possibility that there may be different age related patterns on each of the 23 music genres. Therefore rather than run separate factor analyses of the dimensions for the two age groups to determine if there were significant differences in the clustering of music genres, I ran a one-way ANOVA on the four dimensions and age categories, followed up by ANOVA tests on each of the 23 music genres separately. Through these methods, I was able to identify significant age related patterns in a much simpler way rather than indulge in the complexities of factorial analysis.

3.19 Independent-samples t-tests of the 23 genres

A one-way between-groups analysis (ANOVA) was performed to explore the variance of mean ratings of the four dimensions using age category as the independent variable. Inspection of the mean ratings as demonstrated below in figure 3, reveal interesting patterns of music taste across the lifespan, some which were against expectations.
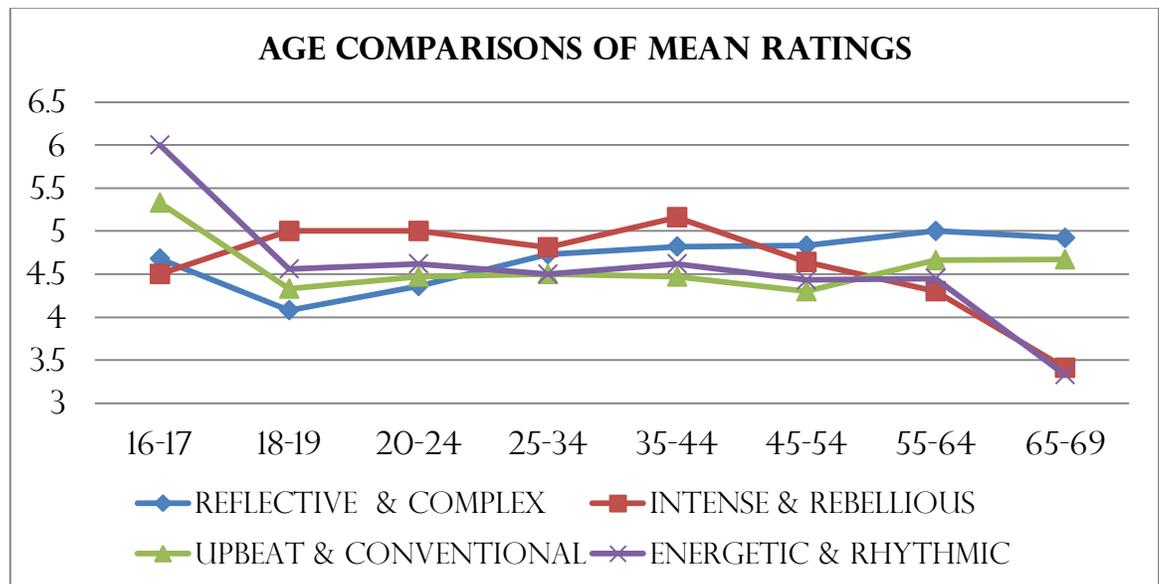
Figure 3. ANOVA of mean ratings of music dimensions

It is important to recognize that these patterns are just a snapshot of the tastes of this population. Although the data cannot be interpreted as indicative of normal patterns of music taste trajectory across the lifespan, it is possible to draw broad conclusions that there are reliable age related trends. For example, the general upward trend for the Reflective and Complex dimension was largely expected, but whether this is due to cognitive developmental reasons (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007; Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2009, 2012) or under-exposure to complex music in the younger years (Giles *et al*, 2009) or neither is it clear if this trend is a reflection of the narrowing of taste in older years for classical and jazz music (Harrison & Ryan, 2009; LeBlanc, 1991; LeBlanc *et al*, 1996; North & Hargreaves, 2002, 2008). However the slow rate of decline for the Intense and Rebellious music in relation to age (notwithstanding the small peak for the 35-44 age bracket (n=34), was of great interest and challenges the claims made by Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, (2013) that adults reject intense styles of music. The only noticeable difference for a decline in ratings for intense music is evident in those participants aged 55 years or more. Interestingly the results from this same group of individuals showed consistency in all dimensions. There is a clear bifurcation of tastes with increased ratings for the Reflective and Complex dimensions and the Upbeat and Conventional dimensions. Conversely there is a rejection of the other two dimensions, Intense & Rebellious and the Energetic and Rhythmic. This finding largely supports Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, (2013) and Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, (2010). This is an interesting finding, but whether this may be attributable to age alone is not obvious. Other forces such as the evolution of music cultures, exposure to different styles of music and confidence in the use of technology may also lay claim to affecting these trends in the relationship between music palate and age.

The relative consistency of both the Intense and Rebellious and the Reflective and Complex dimensions may be indicative of the longevity of certain styles of music of music. Apart from the obvious historical position of classical music, rock and heavy metal have remained to a greater extent a mainstay of British and U.S. popular and sub-culture for the last 60 years or more. It is also interesting to note that other

music genres within these two dimensions have experienced significant fluctuations of popularity. For example in recent years, folk music has undergone a marked rise in popularity across all ages with artists such as Mumford and Sons, Bellowhead, Kate Rusby headlining major music festivals in conjunction with the re-establishment of high status to folk artists such Joan Baez, Sandy Denny, Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan. Of course it is perfectly reasonable to argue that some established artists have always retained their 'legitimate artist' high status (Bourdieu, 1984) within the subcultures and therefore what these results show is the current status of mainstream popularity. However as stated earlier I will return to questions of status shift as part of the taste trajectory in conjunction with changing social situations in a later chapter.

In view of the variations across the age categories, I performed 23 separate independent-samples t-tests to examine differences in the mean ratings of each the music genres. The t-tests were performed instead of a MANOVA analysis for two primary reasons. Relatively high correlations between some of the music genres can have an undue influence on the result of the MANOVA (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009), (for example punk was positively correlated with alternative music ($r=.45$, $p= < .01$)) and secondly, this was a between-samples test and not an analysis that measured a 'before and after' effect on my population. However, due to the inflated risk of a type I error with multiple t-tests, I lowered the alpha level of significance to a more stringent setting using the Bonferroni adjustment to a p value of $<$ .001. The power of effect was calculated according to Pearson's r, thus .01= small effect; .03 = moderate effect; .05 = large effect. The results are set out below in table 1.7 and only show the differences where $p < .001$.

Table 1.7. Independent-samples t-tests for the 23 music genres between younger and older participants.

Music Genres	Mean Scores Age 17-24 years Age 25-66 years	SD	t (df)	p (two tailed)	Effect r
Bluegrass	3.85	1.11	-4.66	< .001	.03
	4.34	1.23	(268)		
Blues	4.74	1.30	-3.73	< .001	.02
	5.10	1.42	(757)		
Classical	4.76	1.58	-8.0	< .001	.15
	5.60	1.32	(368)		
Folk	4.32	1.62	-4.68	< .001	.06
	4.90	1.51	(325)		
International	4.26	1.58	-5.43	< .001	.08
Foreign	4.91	1.39	(339)		
Opera	3.32	1.69	-6.10	< .001	.05
	4.17	1.70	(758)		
Rap	4.51	1.89	3.86	< .001	.02
Hip Hop	3.89	1.84	(759)		
Religious	2.81	1.66	-4.15	< .001	.02
	3.30	1.76	(757)		

Closer analysis of the results demonstrate that the largest effect comparing the mean ratings of the two

age groups and music genre was with classical music genre, which is not totally unexpected in light of

previous independent-samples t-tests between the two age groups and the four music dimension where

only the Reflective and Complex dimension showed statistical significance. Yet the most surprising

result from the independent-samples *t*-tests is that for over half of the genres, no statistical significance

was found between the two age groups. This lack of significance between the mean ratings of younger

and older participants is perhaps indicative of the longevity and broad appeal of certain music styles as

noted earlier. However I believe a more plausible reason for the lack of significant differences between a

large proportion of the music genres, may be explained by different interpretations of the genre, which

are subject to cultural, temporal and geographical interpretations (Gergen, 1991). It is possible that

participants may not share the same meaning or understanding of the music, (Bryson, 1996; Gergen,

1991). It is important to note that the vast majority of the participants were undergraduate and

postgraduate students and while individuals' nationality was not collected for demographic data analysis,

the likelihood that there was broad array of different cultures is considered high. The interviews

confirmed my suspicions that ambiguities in definitions of music genre existed and the number of

different nationalities was indeed varied as expected. Of the 62 participants, 38 were

UK/Ireland/USA/NZ nationals and some confirmed that they had participated in the quantitative study.

However it was clear that different interpretations existed. For example, I asked several participants

aged over 40 what their definition of 'punk music' was, and invariably their reply referred to the UK

punk from the 1970s. Most cited groups such as The Sex Pistols and The Clash, yet when I asked

younger participants aged in their late teens and early twenties the same question, their answers largely

referred to US punk from the 1990s, citing groups such as Green Day, Blink-182, Devo and My

Chemical Romance. However rather confusingly, in the USA punk music is also known as 'alternative

music'. In the UK, alternative music is a broad umbrella term to encompass a range of different styles.

Therefore the positive correlation ($r = .45$, $p = < .01$) noted earlier between punk and alternative music

and variations in definition and interpretation may also explain why no significant differences were found between the two age groups in punk music (t (756) = 1.41, p = > .05), r = .05. There is no way of determining whether the participants interpreted punk music to refer to 1970s UK punk or 1990s US punk. Although there are similarities in the musical attributes and lyrical content, both are generally vocal/guitar driven music with lyrical references to an anti-establishment sentiment or message aimed at a predominantly adolescent audience, it would be difficult to confuse the two music genres. Apart from the significant affect that UK 1970s punk had on British culture (see Frith, 1983), the socio-cultural transformation was not mirrored in the USA in the 1990s. The performance and production of UK punk is intentionally raw, with basic guitar chords and a vocal delivery that is deliberately unpolished. The style of performance is vastly different to the angry but controlled delivery of US punk, supported with higher technical musical abilities and professional production.

3.20 Genre Interpretation

Classifications and interpretation of genres are subject to personal, cultural, geographical and temporal distortions or at worst an exercise in rhetoric and clichés (Gergen, 1991). Delsing *et al,* (2008) also noted significant geographical and cultural differences. Due to a different music culture in Holland, electronica and trance loaded on to their Pop/Dance dimension, corresponding with Rentfrow and Gosling's (2003) Upbeat and Conventional dimension and not the Energetic and Rhythmic dimension. As noted earlier, punk is also called alternative but in the UK alternative is also called New Age, yet the term New Age is in itself problematic because it may be interpreted as ambient music, relaxation, free jazz, progressive rock or pop/rock from the late 1990s, depending on one's temporal and cultural contexts. For example, Bach's oeuvre with its strong connections to prayer, liturgy and biblical themes may fall into the classical music style as part of the Reflective and Complex dimension or classified as a religious style of music, which would place it in the Upbeat and Conventional dimension. This in itself raises questions of how an artist's work is understood, according to personal interpretations and bias. I am unable to clarify what is understood by the genre 'oldies'. Rentfrow & Gosling did not clarify the

type of music that fitted this category. This term like many of the other music genres classifications is ambiguous. As Bryson (1996, p. 894) succinctly observed on the limitations of genre classification, 'these data cannot tell us what respondents have in mind when they think of each genre'. To elaborate this issue, it does not follow that participants who gave high ratings for classical music necessarily like the same music or even agree on what constitutes the term 'classical music'. It is suggested that further quantitative survey research examines music preferences on the basis of its function and not according to ambiguous genre labels. Schäfer and Sedlmeier (2009) noted that individuals selected music on the basis of its function, such as 'helps me relax' or 'confirms my identity'. This would be an interesting study for the future especially if individuals provided examples of the type of music they referred to. To adopt this bottom up approach is perhaps a reversal in design but because of the issues raised above, important questions may be raised through a renewed approach. What is clear is that the apparent delineated boundaries of music preferences are, on closer inspection, blurred and fuzzy around the edges and open to varied interpretations.

Also along a similar vein, it is difficult to specify what type of music Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) had in mind when they created the genres 'international' or 'new age'. To expand this point, Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) found a positive correlation between a liking for International and foreign music and intelligence. They authors do not specify what they mean by the term 'international' and as such it is difficult to understand how a liking for this music is related to intelligence. It is possible that Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) positioned their argument from the perspective of the Anglo-Saxon listener who enjoys the intellectual challenge of listening to music that contains foreign texts or non-twelve-tone scales and quarter tones. However both the USA and the UK, like most first-world industrialised nations have a rich mix of cross-cultural immigration and influences and therefore it is difficult to be certain of the particular types of music that constitute 'international' music. It is difficult to be sure from whose perspective international music refers to. Does an overseas student or an individual of non Anglo-Saxon

heritage see their own popular cultural music as international or popular? For example, if the individual

is of non Anglo-Saxon heritage does this finding negate their findings for a positive correlation between

music and intelligence levels? It is clear that these ambiguities raise important questions regarding the

genre interpretations and content validity.

I would also suggest that the labels that Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) provided may be misleading, which

may have implications on the analysis and interpretation of data that have used the four music

dimensions. For example, is music under the Reflective and Complex dimension always complex and

challenging? I would argue not. To enlighten this point I will take one variable estimated

IQ/intelligence to demonstrate that the relationship between intelligence between the Reflective and

Complex dimension is not as straight forward as it may first appear. If individuals prefer classical or jazz

music for its simplicity then this has significant implications for the way researchers have understood the

relationship between complex music, intelligence and music function. To elaborate this point, it is very

likely that some of the music genres such as classical music and jazz that fall under this dimension are

chosen for their relaxing qualities, a determined step away from complex challenging music. Savage &

Gayo (2011) identified that the classical music, popular music and jazz fans are split between the serious

aficionado and the light entertainment music fan. The authors suggest that liking certain radio stations

reinforces this identity; that is between the individual who enjoys complex non-mainstream music and

likes to see himself or herself as a music aficionado versus the mainstream listener who enjoys the music

for its background qualities or as Frith (2002) suggests, music as 'sonic wallpaper'. To focus on classical

music, Savage & Gayo, 2011 identified that the light entertainment listener preferred to listen to Classic

FM because it was less challenging than BBC Radio 3. Classic FM is a popular choice to hear 'relaxing

music', for not only is there a daily two hour programme where the output is typically the 'adagio' or

second movement sections of symphonic pieces, in addition Classic FM has produced several 'smooth

classics' CDs that are available in the shops. Further inspection of the Classic FM music CDs which

mirrors the radio output, reveals that the breadth of music is largely limited to a handful of mainstream composers mainly from the German stem, an observation supported by some of the participants in the interviews. For the classical music aficionado, Classic FM was largely disliked for its limited output in both composers and type of music it plays. One participant Andrew (66), said that he became so exasperated with the limited output of Classic FM that he stopped listening to it and now only listens to BBC Radio 3 for classical music, because 'Dvorak wrote more than the New World symphony No. 9'. In contrast, BBC Radio 3 is perhaps the music for the aficionado is for the listener who likes to be challenged, to hear the full works of complex non-mainstream classical music by composers such as Berio, Nono, Shostakovich, Schoenberg to name but a very few, rather than particular piece-meal snippets. With these variations in mind, perhaps future research may explore the relationship between intelligence and radio stations listened to and for the function of the music. Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2007) suggested that those with higher levels of measured intelligence prefer to listen to complex music and therefore future studies may explore Savage & Gayo's (2011) themes to examine the relationship between a desire to be challenged and specific radio stations and questions of high and low status.

3.21 Identity and music

Although there is no evidence in this study to indicate that the identity dimensions of Commitment and Exploration are responsible for stability or change in music preferences, there is however good reason to suggest that these dimensions may partially explain fluctuations in taste culture. Crozier (1997) has commented on the relationship between identity and music preferences. He suggested that while there is no hard evidence to support the argument that identity mediates the relationship between music and social influences, he saw no reason to reject the notion. This study has I believe answered and confirmed his enquiry. Although other researchers (Giles *et al,* 2009; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002) have suggested that identity influences musical behavior, Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, (2002) reject the idea that Erikson's theories on identity development can explain music

preference selection outside of a single individual. However, the focus of their work is concerned with a social identity theory rather than identity development, which is a marked difference. The authors have suggested that Erikson's (1950, 1968) theories and Marcia's (1966) identity status model ego-psychological approach to identity may provide answers that inform academic enquiry on an individual basis; but they also argue that this same approach is limited to explain the behavioural explanation of a social group as a whole. However, I believe that the position adopted by the authors is too narrow. This study has shown that Erikson's identity dimensions are in fact robust and reliable predictors of music preferences. Although I do accept that my findings are not as strong or consistent as I would have wished. I accept some of their concerns but I would also suggest that further exploratory research is required to explore how identity development, mediated through maturation and lifespan experiences, and exposure to music influence music preferences and behaviour. It is maintained here that identity development, lifespan experiences, changing social relationships and maturation are likely to have a significant impact on music preferences, levels of engagement with music and alter the function of the music. In essence, it is considered highly likely that there are significant and marked differences between how adults engage and control their music preferences in relation to their identity saliency and complexities of daily life; compared to the psychosocial challenges of identity formation and negotiation that concern many adolescents (Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013; Harrison & Ryan, 2009). It is considered unlikely, though of course not absolute, that adults are less concerned with social group differences, but what is not understood in a broader sense is how does this shift in identity saliency translate on to the music preference trajectory, the function and levels of preference in established tastes.

It was noted in this study that adult have higher Exploration scores than younger individuals. This finding appears to suggest that music preferences are not a static phenomenon with little evidence to suggest that music preferences crystallise in early adulthood. It also suggests that the identity dimensions similarly to personality traits are subject to age related changes and evolution (John & Srivastava, 1999;

Roberts *et al*, 2006; Specht *et al*, 2011), though it is accepted that further exploration of that particular argument lies far beyond the scope of this thesis. However, I do believe that further academic enquiry is warranted to examine and explore the relationship between the two identity dimensions and music preferences. A wealth of research has been written about the reliable nature of personality trait typology to predict preference for certain types of music which may related to a particular function (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007; Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2009; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, Rentfrow, Goldberg & Levitin, 2011; Rentfrow *et al*, 2012; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Zweigenhaft, 2008). This quantitative study has made a small but important contribution to the field of research on music and identity. The absence of serious academic enquiry to use Erikson's dimensions within music psychology should in no way be an indication of their irreverence or limitations to understand the relationship between music and identity (e.g. Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002). And so it is proposed that there should be no good reason why the same level of academic enquiry could not be given to Erikson's (1950, 1968) identity dimensions of Commitment and Exploration either alone or in conjunction with personality traits. It has been identified that there are maturation related changes with both personality traits (an increase in Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, and a decrease in Neuroticism); and fluctuations in levels of identity Commitment and Exploration (Stephen *et al,* 1992) Erikson identified that the challenges of both adolescent and adult daily life are manifold, but each of his life stages has its own problems. Thus it is argued that the identity dimensions are a more nuanced measure of identity saliency than the gradual shift of personality traits and therefore may be more sensitive to the transitions of the relationship between music and identity.

The results of this study suggest that the relationship between music preferences and individual differences is not a stable, static and consistent phenomenon but may be subject to fluctuations and as a consequence further exploratory research is required to explain how the trajectory of music preferences are formed and maintained across the lifespan. Therefore, it is proposed that factors other than individual

differences have to be considered such as educational status, lifespan events, social relationships and exposure to music that may affect the development and maintenance of music preferences.

3.22 Conclusion

I draw attention to the very first page of the introduction where I cited a very astute observation by Frith (1996, p. 109). He commented that, ' My argument here, in short, rests on two premises: first , that identity is *mobile*, a process not a thing, a becoming not a being; second that our experience of music- of music making and music listening- is best understood as an experience of this *self in* process' (italics in original). Frith's (1996) comments thus confirm my position that engagement and agentic behaviour with music is identity in action, as opposed to a fixed static crystallized construction. It is easy to see this identity in action in everyday living. For example, recent technological advancements with internet downloading and portable multimedia devices have created greater opportunities to access music of both past and present. Consequently, it is much easier now to revisit past identities at will (DeNora, 2000; Shankar *et al*, 2009) to maintain and reflect current identities or broaden horizons to access music which is unfamiliar. In essence, music preferences are based upon identity congruency and function. It has been suggested that music is an extension of the self, of how we see ourselves, our values and of course how we would like others to see us (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; DeNora, 2000; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; Hansen & Hansen, 1991; Krause & Hargreaves, 2013; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). I have a degree of sympathy with the uses and gratifications approach, but I do not wholly accept that individuals select music purely on the basis that music satiates psychological needs alone. This would be to denigrate the humanistic actions of choice and the influence of social relationships and determinants that shape our identity. Individuals are both author creator, designer and at the same time recipients, audience, respondents of music function. Identity is a number of fluid processes that is in a continual state of flux, no one aspect is eternally dominant. Everybody has an identity but it is not something that can be constructed through music, though of course music is a very important reflection of who we are (cf. Cook, 1998; Frith, 1996; Rubin, 2002). In other words, it is my position that individuals select and

respond to music because that is who they are, that is their salient identity; it is not because of the music but a reflection of their music and their identity.

This quantitative study has confirmed the strong relationship between individual differences and music preferences and supports previous research but it has also raised a number of questions, so far left unanswered. Identity dimensions and age were significant predictors, but the hypothesis that identity dimensions would be a stronger predictor of preferences than personality traits was not supported. However the results also reveal that there was no significant difference between the age groups of approximately half the number of music styles. It would appear that the fairly low adjusted R^2 scores and the unexplained inconsistencies revealed by splitting and comparing the age groups reveal variances not explained by individual differences or age alone. These anomalies would suggest that the relationship between music preferences and individual differences is not a stable, static and consistent phenomenon but may also be subject to other forces. It is evident that concentrating on individual differences does not tell the full story. Over 80 % of variances could not be explained by personality traits, identity and age alone. It is also of interest that to a large extent, a broad inspection of the trajectory of music preferences across a wide number of genres has been neglected (pace Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013). It is noted that the Hargreaves (1982) and the LeBlanc (1991) approach has identified a shift in the taste trajectory towards music styles that are deemed to be more complex however those studies have examined a narrow range of genres (pop, rock, classical music and jazz). This study has identified that young and middle aged adults gave high ratings to other less complex styles and are just as likely as adolescents to like aggressive styles, electronic and dance styles of music. And so it would appear that further academic enquiry is warranted to explore these apparent anomalies. These may be due to a difference in genre interpretation or due to the fact that the landscape of music engagement is very different than it was over thirty years ago. The advent of the internet and interconnectivity of devices has

had a significant impact on how individuals engage and use their music to negotiate the complexities of daily living (Heye & Lamont, 2010; Krause & Hargreaves, 2013).

It is proposed that not only have technological advancements made a significant difference to how individuals engage with their music, but they may have had an impact on the trajectory of taste. Communication via the internet and through multimedia devices provides multiple opportunities to have access to an almost limitless supply of music. In addition, the use of the devices is gradually spreading to individuals of all ages especially those of retirement age and above. As yet, there is no firm evidence to suggest that these devices have made an impact on the taste trajectory, but in my opinion, there is no good reason to reject the notion. According to the 2013 data survey by the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), the number of individuals aged 65 years or more who have used the internet is 5.5 million which is nearly 13% of the total population of individuals who have used the internet (43.5 million); or to look at on the reverse side over 87% of the internet population are under the age of 65, but the amount of internet usage by older age individuals is increasing. A closer inspection of the internet usage reveals that older individuals are increasingly using the internet to purchase goods (ONS, 2013). For example, according to the ONS data (2013), a comparison of the consumer practices between 2008 and 2013 reveal that the percentage of individuals aged 55-64 years and those aged 65 years or more who have used the internet to purchase goods has increased from 45% to 67% and from 16% to 36% respectively. Although there is no firm data, it is not unreasonable to expect that if the percentage of purchases of film and music by older individuals has increased, then there may be a change of cultural practices. Therefore the data from ONS (2013) may suggest the consumer practices and preferences as covered in the similar study by the Harrison and Ryan (2009) may have evolved in such a relatively short period of time.

Music is undeniably related to identity, but it is a multifunctional concept that operates on different levels (Giles *et al*, 2009); but as yet, questions regarding the trajectory of these preferences and changing

function remain unanswered. The higher level of Commitment and Exploration for older adults is an interesting finding but one which clearly requires further examination through a relocation of the arguments. It was noted in the introduction chapter that my taste in clothes and consumer goods had evolved over the years, yet the issue here is that not only is the type of music genres likely to undergo a degree of transition, but also the function and meaning is also likely to have evolved through maturation (Harrison & Ryan, 2009; Zukin & Smith Maguire, 2004). In light of this, perhaps a more enlightening path to discover how individuals select, engage and interact with their preferred music, according to identity saliency and mediated through social context, lies in a determined methodological shift away from self-reports (Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2009) towards a heuristic exploration of music preferences. Adopting a mixed methodological approach, interviews may be used to enhance and augment current music social psychological research and to explore perceptions and interpretations of music, not possible through self-reports.

Chapter 4. Relocation, relocation, relocation

How many a dispute could have been deflated into a single paragraph if the disputants had dared to define their terms. Aristotle

Occasionally in life there those moments of unutterable fulfillment which cannot be completely explained by those symbols called words. Their meaning can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart.
Dr. Martin Luther King

4.1 Objectives

There are two fundamental purposes to this chapter. The first is to undertake a review of the problem thus far and to elaborate the reasons to include a qualitative study as part of my academic enquiry. The second is to lay the epistemological foundations for the qualitative study. In the introduction chapter, I set out my epistemological and methodological positioning which included a model of profoundisation, whereby the qualitative study is a sequential step, following the quantitative study. It is important to reiterate that one of the primary structural aims of this second study is to be logically and smoothly positioned with the quantitative study. In keeping with my model, it was considered fundamental to dovetail the two rather than embark on a qualitative study with its own set of challenges and questions, which bears little resemblance to the first. Therefore in this chapter I will re-examine some of the unanswered questions, limitations and anomalies of the quantitative study which shaped and informed the foundations of my academic enquiry to re-examine my research problem through Mead's theories of the self.

It has been recognized that the adjusted R^2 scores for all the variables were lower than expected. It would probably be too simplistic and facile to argue that the reason for this lacuna is due to a lack of social determinants. Hargreaves & North (1997) have suggested that social determinants have been overlooked for far too long and more qualitative research o the trajectory of music preferences is

warranted. Other researchers agree with their position (Greasley *et al*, 2013; Shankar *et al*, 2009). Yet there are other concerns that lie beyond psychological processes and social determinants alone. It is of concern here that age and lifespan experiences have not been considered to a greater degree. It is accepted that these factors are strongly related to both psychological processes and social forces, but this is an important point. These issues are not mutually exclusive. A broader approach is required to understand the deeper personal and social functions of music and to understand how the trajectory of preferences evolves (Greasley *et al*, 2013). Therefore one of the aims thus far is to address this anomaly. I believe a broader, inclusive, reciprocal methodological approach is warranted because the individual differences are likely to have informed participants' responses on how and why their preferences have evolved in response to a number of age related and lifespan challenges as noted by Erikson, (1950, 1968). In turn, Mead's theories of the self and symbolic interactionism may provide a deeper insight on to the patterns of individual differences noted in the quantitative study. In the results and discussion section of the qualitative I will re-introduce the findings of the quantitative to establish a broader and deeper understanding of the development and trajectory of music preferences across the lifespan.

4.2 Addendum to the quantitative study

The quantitative study revealed an extremely rich vein of data which suggested that in line with previous studies, there are common patterns which exist between particular personality traits, levels of intelligence and ratings for certain music styles (Bryson, 1996; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007; Chamorro-Premuzic *et al***,** 2009, 2012; Dunn *et al,* 2011; Peterson & Simkus, 1992; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Zweigenhaft, 2008). Due to the large number of participants who responded and participated in the study; it was possible to draw strong reliable, replicable and valid inferences and conclusions from the data. It was extremely useful to develop a broad understand of the relationship between individual differences and music preference tastes in the UK. Through an exploration of the identity dimensions, it has also been demonstrated that music preferences may not necessarily be static but subject to evolution across the lifespan with subject to identity flux. For some

individuals their preferences may be static but for others there may be periods of a re-examination and broadening of their horizons (Lamont & Webb, 2010). In addition, when compared to the Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008) studies, this quantitative study supported previous findings although as noted earlier there were some notable exceptions. But crucially my study differed from the others studies on two main issues, the inclusion and analysis of identity dimensions and to use a wider age range of participants which expanded beyond adolescence and early adulthood.

Although it has been inferred that the higher levels of Commitment and Exploration may reveal that individuals (re) examine and (re) commit their selection of music preferences in response to a number of challenges, further qualitative enquiry is clearly required to identify if and how my hypothesis / research questions translated on to real world cultural practices. Any change in cultural practices may be in response to identity development and lifespan events such as change in personal and social relationships, disequilibrating events, exposure to new cultures or new and unfamiliar music which may in turn lead to a re-orientation and relocation of the strata and hierarchy of music preferences. Yet it is evident that questions remain as to why, when, with whom and perhaps most crucially how these music preferences are influenced and how they are affected by lifespan events and social contexts.

4.3 Transition of taste

From the data, the informed reader is able to ascertain and reliably predict a number of significant relationships which exist between individual differences and music preferences across a wide age range of individuals. For example, the data revealed that eighteen to twenty year old participants are more likely to rate electronica / dance music higher than participants aged between fifty five years and sixty four years of age. It is also evident that this same group of younger participant are more likely to rate jazz or classical music lower than the older participants which is keeping with previous research (Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2010; Harrison & Ryan, 2009; LeBlanc, 1991; LeBlanc *et al*, 1996; North & Hargreaves, 2002, 2008). However what is not evident from the data set is whether in the future if these adolescents

will still think that dance / electronica is an inherent aspect to their identity or continue to dislike classical music. From the quantitative study and previous research studies, it would appear that it is possible to make strong inferences regarding the taste trajectory of individuals in late middle age and beyond. There is a clear division of taste. Individuals from this age group are more likely to give higher ratings to music which falls into the Reflective & Complex and the Upbeat & Conventional dimensions. Interestingly, the one way ANOVA revealed a resurgence in preference for music in the Upbeat & conventional dimension which supports one of Bonneville-Roussy's (2013) claims that late aged adults are drawn towards more conventional tastes in music. Harrison and Ryan (2009) noted that there was a significant narrowed relationship between increased age and the number of genres liked. The authors noted that the individuals aged 55 years or more liked fewer genres than younger individuals and those aged 75 years or more liked the least number of genres. This study appears to support their claim. But when, why and how these changes occur needs further clarification.

There are a multitude of psychological and social factors which may alter an individual's taste palate. It is unlikely that in five, ten or fifteen years, the eighteen year old today will engage with the dance music and commit the same listening hours or even like the music to a similar level once he or she has moved beyond the social setting and friendship group of the dance music. Beyond evolution of individual differences, this shift may also be influenced by a partner, children, career, work colleagues, new friendship groups and exposure to different culture and cultural practices. However, even if the individual disengages from the music, the music may still be an important symbolic aspect of their past identities, past relationships, and socio-cultural experiences (DeNora, 2000; Shankar, 2000; Shankar *et al*, 2009). Low levels of preference do not necessarily equate to music being less important in adulthood (e.g. Schäfer and Sedlmeier, 2009, 2010).

Both Erikson (1968) and Mead (1934) argued that a global sense of identity was an unfolding process shaped by a broad range of normative age related challenges and the difficulties to adapt to a number of

expected and unexpected events. Identity evolved in response to these challenges. It has also been identified that personality traits may also evolve accordingly, though this argument is still contentious among identity researchers. Some researchers (e.g. Costa & McCrae, 1994; Terraciano, Costa & McCrae, 2010) have suggested that personality traits are quasi-biological elements which reach maturity and undergo a degree of stabilization around the age of 30 years. However this assumption has been challenged by a number of researchers (e.g. Helson *et al*, 2002; Roberts, Watson & Viechtbauer, 2006, Srivastava *et al*, 2003). The alternative position is to argue that the Big Five traits are not 'set in plaster' (James 1890 / 1950) in adulthood but are in fact subject to change across the lifespan. There is no overall agreement on the patterns, influences for change nor is it clear whether there are consistent differences between men and women. There are though broad level consistencies which suggest that Agreeableness and Consciousness scores appear to increase through maturation and Neuroticism decreases. Yet the evidence would suggest that the relationship between music preferences and individual differences may not be as robust as previously assumed. If personality traits are flexible then this raises important questions how the relationship between individual differences and music preferences are understood across the lifespan.

4.4 Ontological Repositioning

It may be prudent at this stage to reiterate that one of the primary reasons to carry out a qualitative study was to enlighten and elaborate the results of quantitative study. The two studies are viewed as complementary, different tools to examine the same research problem albeit from different angles. It is not my intention to enter stale futile arguments on whether either quantitative or qualitative research methodology provide 'better' answers; the epistemological and methodological questions dictate that particular conundrum. However it is important at this stage to position my ontological arguments. Although there will be a determined methodological shift, there will be no attempt on my part to claim that I have shifted my arguments to reject the empirical, statistical, mathematical, positivist, quasi-scientific hard data that is 'out there waiting to be discovered'. Nor will I claim that by carrying out a

qualitative enquiry through rich diverse accounts of real life experiences, 'the truth' will naturally be discovered. That approach is largely to pander to simplistic reductionist dichotomous argument and reasoning. In other words, I have not become a converted dyed in the wool social constructionist, far from it. Each research position is to complement the other, each has its strengths and weaknesses, but for this study it is my intention to demonstrate some of the limitations that arise out of my previous survey research on music preferences and in turn justify why I believe a mixed methodological approach is appropriate here to re-examine the arguments.

Traditional psychological approaches have largely adopted a position which argues that individual differences can be measured, analysed and described through a battery of measurement tools (Burr, 1995; Côté & Levine, 2002; Silverman, 1995). This approach would suggest that within each individual, there are *a priori* quasi-biological markers or elements which can be directly measured to explain individual and social behaviour within a variety of contexts. There are of course a number of other personal, social and historical determinants that may also explain an individual's personality and behaviour but I will avoid that argument because that is to enter into the nature/nurture argument which lies beyond the scope of this thesis. One of the primary reasons for the ontological repositioning shift is to explore the influence of lifespan experiences and social factors on the trajectory of music preferences and how these relate to the findings of the quantitative study.

4.5 Social constructionism
The aim of the qualitative study is to reposition the arguments through a social constructionist qualitative perspective to gain access to a rich vein of information and data not available through empirical models employed in recent quantitative research within music psychology. The heuristic exploration will examine and explore patterns of personal and social factors that underpin the development, maintenance, function and trajectory of music preferences. However the term social constructionism denotes a broad church of theoretical approaches that are largely positioned outside of the scientific

'essentialist', empirical approaches. Therefore, I will briefly explore the key constituent elements that make up the various social constructionist approaches which will enlighten why I believe that the traditional school of symbolic interactionism, positioned at the edge of the family of socially constructionist approaches is the most appropriate tool to support and enhance my argument that music is a symbolic object of the self which develops and evolves across the lifespan in line with an evolving sense of self and identity.

Social constructionism is a broad umbrella term that incorporates a number of different research perspectives, each defined within their own framework constructed out of specific use of language. Frequently the specifics of language define the perspective, as has been observed by Holstein & Gubrium (2008: 5):

'Constructionism is not spun out of a whole cloth but rather it is a rubric for a mosaic of research efforts with diverse-but shared- theoretical, methodological, and empirical groundings and significance […] Doing constructionist research is not a synonym for qualitative inquiry […] one's analytical vocabulary virtually specifies the parameters and contours of the empirical horizons explored by the research approach.'

Yet it is the very different and often conflicting uses of vocabulary and language that creates confusion and obfuscation. There is no single school of social constructionism and so paradoxically it often means both something and nothing (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008), and broadly speaking, it relates to the explanation of the phenomenon of social reality and how individuals create meaning out of their identity and social position. Social constructionism challenges traditional psychological positions with notions of positivisms; that social realities are 'there waiting to be discovered and measured'. From a socially constructive perspective all experience is socially, culturally and historically located. The main consequence of this orientation is to position the observer or reader within the particular contexts of concern (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009). Yet it is important to note that it is not a 'free for all', a

field without boundaries. The boundaries are defined by the manipulation, application and

understanding of the language used to construct meaning within that particular research community.

4.6 Criticisms of social constructionism

Holloway & Jefferson (2000) noted that many qualitative researchers erroneously believe that qualitative

methodological approaches, such as participant observation, interviews and exploration of participants'

accounts 'telling like it is', will automatically solve the 'problem' of the empirical, paternalistic,

positivist failings of quantitative research. The usual argument that qualitative inquiry produces

subjective, anecdotal soft data is of no concern here. However as previous researchers have noted, by no

means will I treat my individuals' accounts as unproblematic, unbiased, untainted by image manipulation

or an unproblematic conduit to the truth (cf. Holloway & Jefferson, 2000; Plummer, 1990; Silverman,

2005). Holloway & Jefferson (2000) drew caution against ignoring this maxim when analyzing

individual's narratives and in doing so support Clandinin & Connolly's (1998) claim that narratives are in

'storied form'. Clandinin & Connolly (1998) have suggested that:

Neither selves nor accounts are transparent in our view. Treating people's own accounts as unproblematic flies in the face of

what is known about people's less clear-cut, more confused and contradictory relationship to knowing and telling about

themselves. In everyday informal dealings with each other, we do not take each other at face value, unless we are totally naïve;

we question, disagree, bring in counter-examples, interpret, and notice hidden agendas.

On reflection of the research, my position is to concur. It has been highlighted that this qualitative study

is to complement the quantitative study in developing a broader theoretical understanding of the

development and trajectory of music preferences. My analysis of individuals' accounts will be treated as

storied accounts of experience (Silverman, 2005), not as a narrative of the self and in line with Holloway

& Jefferson (2000) neither will they be treated as conduits to the truth. Although social constructionism

has been criticized for being too diverse, a broad diluted approach to explain social reality, for some (e.g.

Burr, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Holstein & Gubrium 2008) that that is part of its strength. Yet

ironically, it would appear that it is the specific uses of the vocabulary as highlighted by Holstein &

Gubrium (2008) above, used to create the boundaries between the approaches above that are often the source of confusion. The boundaries are definitely fuzzy around the edges. Each approach staunchly defends the application and meaning of their particular niche of vocabulary, but too often these same words hold different meaning from the view of another research community. There is no specified fulcrum or 'bright white line' (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006), that delineates the point at which a fuller or lesser degree of explanation is required for the particular academic audience or community.

The vast array of socially constructed approaches often appears to overlap one another in obscure linguistics. The tortuous linguistic path distorting clarity of thought within social constructionism is a problem that is also recognized by Burr (1995: 16), 'I have to say that I consider a fair amount of what is written to be unnecessarily difficult and obscure'. However the complexities of these apparent obscure of definition and linguistic complexities within social constructionism only supported my decision to select the symbolic interactionism as the most appropriate tool.   Symbolic interactionism was deemed to be the most appropriate tool for a number of reasons. Apart from the obvious link between my research and Mead's theories on the evolution of meaning and objects, the absence of complex linguistic and philosophy was a welcome relief. It has been established throughout that my epistemological position is to draw on Erikson's & Mead's theories of an unfolding evolving sense of identity in response to natural identity maturation and a number of lifespan challenges.   The decision to use Mead's theories was also based upon practical reasons too.

Although I have argued that the epistemological question to my research problem is clearly positioned within a neo-Meadian view of symbolic interactionism and not in a postmodernist context, this approach is not confined to questions of epistemology alone, but implications for my methodological approach as well. To elaborate, I carried out a thematic analysis of individuals' accounts because I was drawn to the notion that a linguistic or philosophical theoretical framework is generally not required (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). The framework of thematic analysis is a marked step away from a narrative analysis which

duly welcomes the primacy of philosophical thought which dominates much of narrative research. Josselson (2012: 225) affirms the importance and ubiquity of philosophy in narrative research when she states that '[narrative research] relies on the foundational work of such philosophers as Ricoeur, Heidegger, Dilthey, Wittgenstein, Bahktin, Lyotard, MacIntyre, and Gadamer'. In short, philosophy continues to play a significant role in the foundations of much of qualitative and narrative research (Wertz *et al*, 2011). In contrast, those who adhere to the humanist foundations of the symbolic interactionism, Josselson's position is an anathema. The theoretical perspective founded on the pragmatic principles and social humanist beliefs of Mead, Cooley, Dewey & W.I. Thomas largely rejects most of Western philosophy (Rock, 1979; Plummer, 1991). Symbolic interactionism rejects grand imposing, philosophical and sociological theories which wade deep into philosophical or theoretical frameworks to explain natural human social interaction at the expense of all biographical and real –world experiences (Cooley, 1902; Denzin, 2005). The philosophical foundations of pragmatism which underpins symbolic interactionism rejected the notion of universal truths and stasis of thought. In fact concepts such as truth, meaning, interpretation of objects and language are always temporary, mediated by language and social interaction (Baldwin, 1986; Joas, 1985; Oliver, 2011). However, it is only fair to note that the flexibility of symbolic interactionism has led some researchers (e.g. Fine, 1993; Fine & Kleinman, 1996; Huber, 1973a, 1973b, 1974) to question the fundamental theoretical validity of symbolic interactionism. On reflection of the arguments cited, it is my position to argue that symbolic interactionism is the ideal tool to formulate an interpretation of the evolving and fluid complexities of human interaction, both personal and social.

One of the underlying principles of the qualitative study was to reposition the arguments but most crucially with the findings of the quantitative study in mind. It was also considered important to explore how the findings of previous studies played out in the cultural experiences of ordinary people. For example, it has identified in response to maturation there is a narrowing of taste genres with an increased

liking for high art and complex styles of music as well as rebound for popular music styles but this is tempered with a gradual rejection of intense rebellious forms of music (Bonnville-Roussy *et al*, 2013; Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2010; Hargreaves & North, 2008; Harrison & Ryan, 2009; LeBlanc, 1991; LeBlanc *et al*, 1996). But questions of why and when are so far largely unexplained. Greasley *et al*, (2013) have drawn attention to the fact that strong inferences can be made in relation to age related patterns of taste, but the authors also highlight the concerns raised thus far, namely that the trajectory of taste is largely unknown. In relation to the quantitative study it was considered important to try and determine how higher levels of Exploration and Commitment translates on to everyday cultural practices. Does the tenacity of rebellious music into middle age till hold true? How has the function and meaning of the music shifted in response to maturation and the responsibilities of adulthood? On reflection how do they see view their adolescent tastes and how do these reflect o their current taste palate? Have their preferences evolved and if so how, when and why have this been so?

Therefore one of the primary aims of the semi-structured interviews from a symbolic interactionist perspective will be to explore how the meaning and function of the music has developed and evolved in relation to individuals' identity development and saliency. This is why I believe that this heuristic exploration of individuals' music preferences, using a symbolic interactionist lens is the most natural tool to explore the evolution of meaning and shifting orientations towards their music as a symbolic object of identity. Consequently, this exploration of identity will examine not only the relationship between identity saliency and development and music function, but the effect that changing personal and social relationships have on the trajectory music preferences.

4.12 Conclusion

To avoid unnecessary repetition I will explore the central canon of symbolic interactionism in the next chapter. I will also set out why I believe Mead's theories on the meaning of significant objects and evolution of that meaning holds particular resonance for this thesis. I will briefly discuss the alternative

theoretical schools of symbolic interactionism, but the central canon is considered to be the most appropriate tool to explore the shifting meaning and transition of objects which are inherent to one's identity. As will become evident, Mead's theories on the emergent self hold strong connections with Erikson's notion of an unfolding identity adapting to the challenges of daily life. Yet the important issue here is that because of the strong echoes that exist between Erikson's theories on identity development and Mead's theories on the emergent self; a neo-Meadian reading of symbolic interactionism provides an excellent forum to understand an inform both the quantitative and qualitative studies. In essence, a neo-Meadian approach establishes a solid bridge that links and informs both studies to develop a broad theoretical understanding of the development and trajectory of music preferences. In addition, a neo-Meadian reading also fulfills a vital methodological role and that is to dovetail the qualitative study with the findings of the quantitative study which is an extremely important concern with my model of profoundisation.

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Chapter 5. Symbolic Interactionism

5.1 Epistemological positioning of symbolic interactionism

One of the main aims of this chapter is to build from Mead's definition of the self-covered in the introduction and to define the terms of reference of symbolic interactionism which will inform my qualitative study on how individuals interpret their music as a significant symbolic object of their identity. The quantitative study revealed that there were age related patterns of taste and identity development but questions of why and how remain largely unanswered. Therefore one of the central aims of the qualitative study is to re-examine the research problem from a new but complementary angle.

The relationship between identity and the emergent self and an evolving meaning of objects is pivotal for this thesis. Meaning of symbolic objects is an interactive process whereby a symbolic object, such as music is shaped by social interaction but each individual brings their own personal experiences to that interaction. As a consequence of this biphasic reciprocal relationship, it is argued that the meaning of the music is not a static phenomenon but subject to evolution and re-orientation. Evolution of meaning is pivotal to the foundations of symbolic interactionism and draws heavily on Mead's pragmatic beliefs. I will also expand on my argument noted in the previous chapter that the symbolic interactionism is the most appropriate theoretical lens to examine the evolving meaning and shifting significance of music preferences across the lifespan. This chapter is an elaboration to justify why the neo-Meadian reading or the traditional school of symbolic interactionism is considered to be the most appropriate tool for the qualitative study. As noted earlier, within a socially constructive perspective, language has provided much of the focus to determine how individuals create accounts or narratives of their identity. My epistemological position is that a focus on the uses of language or an exploration on how individuals

construct notions of the self through language is of not of any concern here. The positioning of this

qualitative study is situated far beyond linguistic discourses of critical theory, postmodernism, post-

structuralism, feminist or queer theory, hermeneutics, existential-phenomenology, semiotic analysis,

discourse analysis and cultural theory to name but a few. Embedded within humanistic pragmatic

reasoning, the traditional canon of symbolic interactionism, sits outside of many these discourse-led

approaches. The postmodernist language of construction and deconstructions of the self and the 'death of

the author' bypass much of this theoretical perspective (Callero, 2003; Plummer, 1990). Rather aptly,

symbolic interactionism has been described as the black sheep of the social constructionist family, sitting

defiantly on the edges of social constructionism without ever truly breaking away from its social

constructionist foundations (Denzin, 1992; Gubrium & Holstein, 2008; Plummer, 1991). It is a

humanistic, pragmatic based perspective which is positioned away from the deep, intricate introspective

philosophical theories and grand social theories encroached in terms that only the academic community

understand (Denzin, 1992). One of its central tenets is to understand the experiences of ordinary people

using their words, as 'they see the world' (Cooley, 1902).

My reasons for selecting this approach rather than a cultural studies approach or a postmodern view of

constructions of the self through cultural artifacts are based upon two main factors. Firstly the critical

and central focus of this thesis is an examination of the trajectory of music preferences and not on

constructions of the self through discourses or texts. A focus on how individuals create meaning out of

significant objects through an interplay between personal experiences and social interaction will take

dominance here. I duly acknowledge the existence of these arguments and further research may indeed

re-examine my data using this approach; but for this thesis constructions of the self are positioned outside

the parameters of my academic enquiry. The second reason to use the symbolic interactionism is that

Mead's theories on the evolution of meaning of objects including the emergent self, developing and

evolving through language, personal experiences and social interaction hold strong resonance with my

thesis. It is proposed that an examination of individuals' experiences and understanding of their music preferences will not only provide a deeper insight on the trajectory of music preferences, but also enlighten the results of the quantitative study. It is suggested that the deep consideration of both studies will create a broad but in-depth understanding of how individuals' music preferences evolve across the lifespan.

5.2 Music as an object of the self

One of the axiomatic arguments drawn from Mead's theories on the meaning of objects is that objects do not have inherent meaning. Meaning is created and continually re-appraised and redefined through social interaction and language on an inter-individualistic basis. To apply this on to my research it is thus argued that music preferences are symbolic objects of the self which evolve across the lifespan in relation to identity development personal experiences and changing personal and social relationships.   The meaning and function of music in adolescence is likely to shift through maturation. In addition the language set that individuals use as part of a particular music and social community is also likely to evolve. According to Mead (1934), the meaning of objects and language naturally evolve through social interaction, but nothing is ever static. The meaning, language and social communities evolve and adapt to new challenges and experiences. As Mead suggested (1934: 78):

Language does not simply symbolize a situation or object which is already here in advance; it makes possible the existence or the appearance of that situation or object, for it is a part of the mechanism whereby that situation or object is created.

In essence Mead argued that the meaning of language and objects evolve mediated and maintained through social interaction and different personal experiences. Therefore, I return to my earlier point that music is a symbolic object of the self. Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald's (2002) suggest that the trajectory of the music could be seen as a medium to construct, negotiate and manage identities. Their view reflects DeNora's (2000) oft-quoted assertion that music is a 'technology of the self', used for identity construction. From a pragmatic, humanist symbolic interactionist perspective, the notion that

music holds supernatural powers to construct an identity or control human behaviour is to be challenged. Within a symbolic interactionist framework, all action comes from within the individual. The individual creates meaning out of the object through past experiences and social interaction and he or she responds accordingly, but behaviour or response cannot be imposed upon without the will or conscious mind of the human individual. However, if the individual does not share the same meaning and function of the music, then it is unlikely that they will respond accordingly. For example, if an individual is given or hears a piece of 'relaxation' music because he or she recognizes that it is pan-pipe music, and the picture on the cover of the CD to enforce the function of relaxation music, then individuals has understood through social interaction, previous experiences and memory that is probably so. If the individual accepts that he or she will feel that the music fulfills that function then that is the outcome. However what is not accepted within symbolic interactionism is that if the music is generally disliked, and clearly not deemed to be understood as 'relaxation music' then it is unlikely that the individual will relax or feel relaxed. The same reasoning applies to all gross cognitive behaviour such as driving fast or taking part in reckless behaviour or illicit drug taking (Arnett, 1995, Bleich *et al*, 1991; Chen *et al*, 2006; Dixon *et al*, 2009; Tanner, Asbridge & Wortley, 2009; Zweigenhaft, 2008). Put another way, if an individual does not understand the lyrical text within an Indian raga, then how can the music move him or her to feel the deep emotion? In essence, function and reaction to music comes from within the individual and their identity saliency. Symbolic interactionism is a humanistic framework which puts people at the heart of all interaction and agency and its main focus is how individuals create meaning out of social interaction with each other and significant symbols.

Thus music which was used to create a certain image or fulfill a particular function may no longer be positioned within the spectrum of identity saliency and as a consequence, it is shifted or manipulated to fulfill a different function such as nostalgia, or indeed rejected. Alternatively, the meaning of previously rejected music styles may also shift as they learn new information about music styles, cultural history and

others' interpretations of music. The source of information may be gleaned from new friendship groups, partners, or exposure through the diversity of university or college. The important issue here is that according to Mead, meaning and function of objects is never static but evolves across the lifespan through different social interaction groups and personal experiences. And so it is proposed that music is a symbolic object representative of both current and past identities, an extension of the self (Belk, 1988; Cohen, 1989; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Dittmar, 1992, 2012; Tian & Belk, 2005).

5.3 Canon of symbolic interactionism

Although the basic theoretical canon of the symbolic interactionism is drawn from Mead's theories on the interplay between the significance and evolution of symbols, language, objects, the self and social interaction (Oliver, 2012; Plummer, 1990). It would be a mistake to assume that all symbolic interactionists come from the same epistemological base. In fact, it is fair to say that the development and evolution of symbolic interactionism has been anything but a series of smooth transitions. A succession of internecine wars is probably closer to the matter.[7] Therefore, the focus of this study will be on the trajectory of music preferences, positioned within the original, neo-Meadian, traditional school of symbolic interactionism as defined by Blumer (1969). I will very briefly highlight two competing schools of symbolic interactionism, cultural interpretive studies school and semiotic theory. To argue that an examination of the evolution of the trajectory of music as a cultural product, through either school of symbolic interactionism does indeed have merit; but both were rejected for good reasons, namely they are too far removed from Mead's pragmatism and embedded in philosophical theory.

 Mead's pragmatic beliefs are an important aspect to the central canon of symbolic interactionism. Pragmatism removes the heavy shackles of tortuous philosophical argument from cultural theory or any other postmodern theory; in fact it rejects most Western philosophy and grand sociological theories

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[7] I carefully avoided the use of the word 'truth'. According to the pragmatists, there is no such thing as the truth, just provisional truths but somehow 'closer to the provisional truth' has less impact than I wanted. For an in-depth historical analysis, (please see Denzin, 1992; Joas, 1985, Plummer, 1991; Rock, 1979).

pontificating from the ivory towers (Denzin, 1992; Plummer, 1991). In the eyes of the pragmatists (Cooley, Dewey and Mead) the answers to most questions of daily existence could be found in the here and now, in real life as seen through the eyes of those under study from their historical and cultural contexts. For the perspective of the pragmatist, the existence of the self, human activity and the intricacies of social interaction could be explained, not through deep introspection or through theological or philosophical debate but through close examination of the daily lives of ordinary persons. Neither did they believe that could the answers be found in the supernatural mind that exists outside of the body, but in the raw realities of daily existence (Aboulafia, 1991, Rock, 1979).[8]

One of my central arguments running through this thesis is that music is a symbolic object representative of identity. Thus I intend to demonstrate how the meaning of the music as defined through a symbolic interactionism lens evolves across the lifespan in line with identity development and lifespan experiences which shape self-views on identity. To avoid any epistemological or lexical confusion, I should perhaps clarify my position on the use of the word 'meaning' in relation to music in this thesis. Firstly, I steer a wide berth of the definition commonly used within musicological hermeneutic arguments. These arguments relate to discourses which explore the notion that music has 'discursive meaning' to be interpreted as if it were a literary text. This approach also has a strong literary heritage. Secondly, in line with many other schools of symbolic interactionism, there will be no attempt to position the arguments within semiotic theory. Although Mead was influenced by Peirce's semiotic theory, his theories tread a very different path away from semiotic theory (Denzin, 1992). The most suitable and appropriate application of the word 'meaning' used in this thesis, is what the music holds for the individual in terms of personal memories, relationships, political views, values, perceptions to that individual. Thus the context of the word meaning for this study meaning may also refer to an individual's interpretation or

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[8] Descartes' idiom, 'I think therefore I am', was firmly rejected by the pragmatists as promoting mind dualism. They believed that one's identity incorporated all aspects of the self, including the mind, physiological changes and social contexts. In effect man could not be separated into different parts but all the parts made up a unified whole.

attitude towards specific social groups and communities, which may be strongly associated with a specific style of music (e.g. the paso doble for Hispanic immigrant communities, or traditional Irish folk music for the travelling community). Other factors may be related to race, sexual orientation, nationality or because that community is perceived, rightly or wrongly, to adhere to a particular lifestyle choice. Reyna Brandt & Viki (2009) observed that some individuals, who expressed strong negative ratings for music styles strongly associated with the young black community, were more likely to hold negative stereotyping attitudes than those who rated this music highly. Through personal interpretation of the relationship music and identity, some may also assume that an individual is likely to behave recklessly or take illegal drugs simply based upon their music preferences and/or their dress sense or indeed age. Negative or positive attitudes may or may not be based on real experience, but they are an inherent aspect of that individual's identity and as a consequence part of their cognitive behaviour. Alternatively, the meaning of music may refer to personal associations or references such as particular emotions related to memories of specific social or personal contexts associated with the music. Although it is highly likely that meaning and preference are influenced by each other I will make no attempt futile to define the parameters of either concept. They should probably be seen as two sides of the same coin.

The traditional model of symbolic interactionism was selected primarily because it is arguably the closest interpretation of Mead's theories on the self, the mind and the evolving meaning of objects mediated through social interaction. It is widely accepted that Blumer's seminal book *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspectives and Method* (1969), perhaps the *locus classicus* of all symbolic interactionist texts, first established symbolic interactionism as a flexible, broad quasi-theoretical perspective within the American sociological academic community.   The focus on the humanistic basis of the traditional model and the interaction between self (as an object), significant objects and society can also be seen in the following section by Blumer (1969: 20):

This approach [symbolic interactionism] sees a human society as people engaged in living. Such living is a process of ongoing activity in which participants are developing lines of action in the multitudinous situations they encounter. They are caught up in a vast process of interaction in which they have to fit their developing actions to one another. This process of interaction consists in making indications to others of what to do and interpreting the indications as made by others. They live in worlds of objects and are guided in their orientation and action by the meaning of these objects. Their objects, including objects of themselves, are formed, sustained, weakened, and transformed in their interaction with one another. This general purpose should be seen, of course, in the differentiated character which it necessarily has by virtue of the fact that people cluster in different groups, belonging to different associations, and occupy different positions. They accordingly approach each other differently, live in different worlds, and guide themselves by different sets of meanings.

The central focus of enquiry within much of symbolic interactionism is largely orientated towards an examination of constructed meanings between individuals, objects and their social groups positioned firmly within the harsh experiences within the real world (Aboulafia, 1991; Roberts, 1977; Schwandt, 1998). These experiences provide the individual the grounding to partake and understand situations and behave accordingly. Mead (1934: 7) underlines the interplay between the self as a social being created through the social act in the following passage:

I wish, however, to restrict the social act to the class of acts which involve the cooperation of more than one individual, and whose object is the act […] By a social act I mean one that answers to all parts of the complex act, though these parts are found in the conduct of different individuals. The objective of the act is then found in the life process of the group, not in those of the separate individuals alone.

The section cited above was to form the foundations of the Blumer-Mead model of symbolic interactionism. Blumer's (1969: 2) oft-quoted phrase usually forms the basis for most symbolic interactionist texts and studies. Blumer noted that: 'Human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them'. Symbolic interactionism drawn from Mead's theories on the evolution of meanings and the emergent self is largely based upon three interconnected basic tenets. It is

a broad theoretical church based upon humanistic and pragmatic principles which examines how

individuals create meaning out of social interaction (Oliver, 2012; Plummer, 1991). Firstly, that daily

lives are inherently symbolic where the meaning of the symbols is created out of social interaction.

Secondly, that social interaction, language and the meaning of symbols are rarely fixed but subject to

constant re-appraisal and evaluation. In essence our daily lives are always in a constant state of action,

communication, negotiation and maintenance. The final tenet of symbolic interactionism is that neither

the self nor society takes precedence over the other (Baldwin, 1986; Serpe & Stryker, 2012). The self

and society are inherently bound to each other, party to a continual biphasic reciprocal relationship. The

self is shaped by social interaction and in return society is shaped by individuals who bring to society and

social interaction their own personal experiences.

5.4 Interactionist versus interpretive approaches to SI

It is accepted that others may believe that my academic enquiry on an examination and exploration of

cultural products evolving through daily living and social interaction is perhaps better suited to an

examination through the lens of the cultural interpretive studies approach of symbolic interactionism

(e.g. Denzin, 1992). There is merit in this argument. However, Mead's theories and the traditional

canon of symbolic interactionism rejects grand sociological theories that determine or aim to explain

behaviour through the use of static theories. It is refuses to concur or bow down to fellow academic

positions which studied society in a paternalistic, elitist manner or use an obscure form of language laden

with jargon which is only understood by other sociologists and fellow academics (Denzin, 1992, 2004).

Denzin is correct. The central canon of symbolic interactionism rejects deep philosophical theory

(Plummer, 1991, Rock, 1979) which is why I find it odd that he should also argue for a cultural

interpretive theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism which deviates away from Mead's

pragmatic views. The two positions purported by Denzin do not appear to marry. On the one hand he

has suggested that symbolic interactionism should retain its humanistic orientated perspective to reject

grand social theories but on the other Denzin has rejected the same social humanism in favour of an

approach that blends critical hermeneutics and post-structuralism encroached in complex academic language (Schwandt, 1998). The cultural interpretative approach is a significant step away from Mead's pragmatism or Blumer's (1969) interpretation that symbolic interactionism should focus on how ''actors' [individuals'] interpretation is rendered intelligible not merely through the description of word and deed, but by taking that rich description as appoint of departure for formulating an interpretation of what the actors are up to' (p.56). In other words, interpretations of human activity should be analysed and understood from their perspective, not the researcher's perspective. This is not to reject Denzin's (1992) perspective outright, but I simply believe that Denzin is misguided to step away from the pragmatic world of Mead, Dewey, Cooley and W.I. Thomas. An alternative approach is taken by Vannini and Waskul (2006), who make a case for a relocation of symbolic interactionism within semiotic theory. They argue that musical attributes are a direct reflection of symbolic interaction. The authors suggest that the qualities of music denote the nuances of everyday life:

'Rhythm refers to the organized movement, duration, variation and pattern of sound. Tone colour (or timbre) refers to the unique quality or characteristics of sound […] And finally, in a sense, symbolic interaction is like a musical composition insofar as it is an unfolding process experienced as a complete phenomenon in its wholeness, as well as its parts. The presence and variation of these qualities are what uniquely structure and defines both music and the experience of everyday life' (p.6).

I accept everyday life can be attributed and described as musical sounds and their understanding of music as an unfolding process is understood; but I'm not convinced of their ontological argument. Music is about experience, sound, touch, hope, emotions, and dreams. Yet I fail to see how music can satisfactorily converted into the linguistic complexity of semiotics. Yet dragging music across the divide through a semiotic minefield into linguistic tautology surely strips it of the very qualities, such as sound, experience, memories, fantasies and emotions that for most people make it an essential part of everyday life. Vannini & Waskul's (2006) assertion that symbolic interaction is music and life is music, is

considered inherently problematic. This position appears detached of the importance of social interaction and social forces which are so crucial with the development of music preferences and engagement. Their argument is circuitous and convoluted and as such I fail to see its relevance. Thus it is my aim to position my arguments deep within the Meadian school of symbolic interactionism. In my opinion, Mead's core beliefs of humanism, pragmatism and his evolution theories form the fundamental building blocks of symbolic interactionism; and which best inform my arguments on the development of music tastes as symbolic objects of the self which evolve in response to identity development and lifespan experiences.

5.5 The case for the traditional approach

Rock (1979: 3) re-iterates and underlines Mead's position that 'vital to symbolic interactionism is a denial of the philosophical tradition which gave birth to sociology'. Rock's argument rests on the central premise that under the apparent hegemony of sociological or philosophical theory, analysis and interpretation of social phenomena are at risk of becoming distorted and disfigured under the 'excess of structure or definition' (p.18). Thus it is my position that while the interpretive cultural studies model may be a perfectly valid model of symbolic interactionism, I am inclined towards the traditional model and a retrospective repositioning through Mead's humanistic and pragmatic beliefs which rejects much of Western philosophy. Mead and his fellow pragmatists rejected introspective complex philosophical abstract thought at the expense of human based subjective experience. Interestingly, Lemert (1992: ix) clearly fully aware of the battle for the rightful ownership of symbolic interactionism between the different positions observed sardonically:

'   Just the same, symbolic interactionism in sociology, like pragmatism more generally, finds itself limited today by its weird irrelevance to the debate over the postmodern condition. Symbolic interactionism with its decided interest in language, and pragmatism, with its deep structural commitment to view knowledge as always close to the

workings of the world, would seem to be the natural kin of any postmodern social theory. This has not been the case […].

Lemert has identified both the tortuous path the symbolic interactionism has led whilst at the same time recognized that symbolic interactionism and postmodernism are not easy bedfellows (cf. Callero, 2005). It is not my position to dismiss such an approach, far from it, but postmodernist discourses and methodological positions are considered irrelevant to my study. For this study, concerns with language, or postmodernist discourses on the power of shaping the self hold no interest. In my view symbolic interactionism and postmodernism originate from different genera and significant epistemological and conceptual differences, though it is accepted that others may disagree. In any case the focus of this study is to explore how the meaning of individuals' music preferences has evolved in response to an evolving identity and other factors, and not to focus on the constructions and deconstructions of the self itself; a subtle but crucial and fundamental ontological difference. Thus my approach through Mead and symbolic interactionism will focus on the traditional model and examine the use of music as an object, representative of a multidimensional identity. In essence, I wish to see a return to Meadian values to interpret how individuals create, interpret meanings and interpretations of music as symbolic representations of their identity both past and present across the lifespan (Ahuvia, 2005; Belk, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Cohen, 1989; Dittmar, 1992, 2012; Kroger & Adair, 2008, Shankar *et al*, 2009). Therefore, it is my intention to argue that my ontological position sits within the narrow framework of the neo-Meadian school of symbolic interaction. It is not my aim to suggest that the interpretive cultural studies or any of the alternative approaches are incorrect they hold perfectly valid positions within symbolic interactionism. However, to examine music as a symbolic representation of identity, as a cultural force within a symbolic interactionist framework, I believe that it is a mistake to ignore Mead's humanist, pragmatic and evolution theories. Although it is argued that meaning of music is subject to evolution of meaning. It is evident that his definition of the self in-process (cf. Frith, 1996)

is connected to the evolved meaning of the object created through social interaction and may explain why preferences evolve in relation to an evolved sense of self.

5.6 Mead's definitions of the self

Mead's emphasis on the relationship between society and the self is a pivotal concept within the traditional school of symbolic interactionism (Roberts, 1977). His self may be considered to be a radical definition because this self is positioned firmly within the empirical world, devoid of deep philosophical introspection and should be examined as a product of its own actions within the real world (cf. Cooley, 1902). Mead's self is creative, proactive, self-reflexive and intelligent. To highlight the biphasic reciprocal interaction between self and society, thoughts, responses, actions are a product of self-reflexive actions, past and present experiences of social interaction; but also these same actions and experiences are brought back into social interaction so that both society and the self develop in response to the complexities of daily life. The self is not a pre-determined biological given but develops through social interaction, which is determined step away from personality trait theory which posits the notion that we are born with a specific personality template which stabilizes from the early thirties and across the lifespan (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Mead's self is often referred to as an 'emergent self' (Baldwin, 1986; Blumer, 1981). The social humanistic influence of pragmatism and reason on Mead's definition of the self cannot be underestimated (Dewey, 1931; Roberts, 1977). I will address this important issue shortly, but for now it is imperative to understand the historical basis of Mead's self. It is possible to trace the origins of Mead's theories on the self and the crucial function that social interaction has on the self back to his predecessors, James and Cooley. Mead's theories are beyond doubt a triangulation drawn from the other two but with one fundamental crucial difference. Mead's definition of the self and the mind exist in the real world as part of real social interaction and not as a supernatural intangible force, nor in the imagination, as suggested by Cooley (1902).

James' (1890/1950) definition of the self belies an undercurrent of phenomenologist ideology. For James, at the centre of consciousness was the self, also known as the subject or the 'I', but there were four different types of selves which included the 'me', the 'social self' as well the 'I'. In addition, James' consciousness reflected everyday experiences and social interactions and as a consequence of the multifaceted self at the centre of consciousness, there were as many selves as they had social relationships. However Mead rejected James' self because it existed alone in consciousness which promoted mind dualism, the self separate from the rest of the body which was a contravention of Mead's philosophical pragmatic beliefs.

Cooley's self (1902) differs from James's self, rejecting the notion the social self was part of the individual. For Cooley the individual and social selves existed on opposite sides of the coin (Denzin, 1992). There is little doubt that Cooley's self influenced Mead's own definition of the self. For example Cooley believed that the self existed in the imagined views of others derived through social interaction but through the domain of imagination only. To expand, Cooley coined the phrase 'the looking glass self' which denoted Cooley's belief that the self was defined and developed through social interaction as individuals imagined the impressions of how they appeared to others and the emotions such as pride or disappointment associated with these imaginations. Although Mead's self and Cooley's self share commonality on the development of the self through social interaction, Cooley's social self crucially exists in the mind. Although Mead drew on both James and Cooley, Mead's self as noted earlier existed and developed through social interaction and experience, but crucially Mead's self existed in the real world and not solely through consciousness or imagination alone. Mead's definition of could only arise from social interaction. In other words it was the product of social interaction and previous experiences. This self developed in response to significant symbols (language, gestures, and signs) and to the perceived responses of others as part of the social interaction manifested through actions of role play. Mead's self is firmly located in social interactions of the real world.

5.7 Evolution of the meaning across the lifespan

Blumer's (1969) three premises for the basis of symbolic interactionism, namely that meaning is not inherent in any object, meaning is socially constructed and that interpretations undergo transformation through interactive process; is drawn from Mead's notion of the proactive individual to shape his or her own environment.   Mead's notion of the proactive individual, influenced by his advocacy and adaptation of Darwin's theory of evolution, is crucial to this thesis. Although he was influenced by Darwinsim, ultimately he argued that it was insufficient to explain human social interaction and agency. Whereas Darwinsim argued that the society and animals adapt to their environment and needs; Mead argued that individuals were superior to the animals because they were proactive in their actions and evidence of this could be seen in the way individuals shaped their environments. In short, differences could be seen between proactivity and agency versus passivity and adaptability. Mead also suggested that individuals could understand their actions through internal conversations, whereby he or she could project or imagine what others would interpret their actions. People shaped their environment through whatever means they had, albeit through language, direct or indirect action. Through a symbolic interactionist lens, it is argued that individuals make proactive choices to manage their music preferences in response to shifting personal and social relationships for self-esteem or social integration reasons.

Blumer, drawing from Mead argued that meaning is never fixed and is always under constant renewal and re-interpretation. These notions are drawn from Mead's belief that all meanings, social activity and interpretations of events and situations are fluid and undergo constant evolution and subsequent re-appraisal through continual self-reflexive adjustments and re-interpretations. The interpretation and re-interpretation of meanings is carried out simultaneously by the individual and the social community 'the other', either through self-reflection and internal conversations with the other or through overt external conversations. The evolution of meaning within language can be seen through the widespread socially acceptable use of the word 'gay' has shifted to a new meaning over the last fifty years to shift from meaning jolly or light hearted to its current everyday reference to homosexuality.

Another example of how the meaning of language can change through social interaction is evident in the following contentious example. The point that I wish to make here is that social interaction can shift meaning from a negative insult to positive action and removal of the insult. The term 'niggers' used in any context is quite rightly considered to be a highly offensive term to black individuals and if I were to utter the word directly or indirectly to a black person (s), it should be of no great surprise to be arrested and convicted of racial assault and the use of objectionable and offensive language. Yet fifty years ago, while still considered to be an offensive term (and intended to be so for that matter), it was less socially reprehensible. Thankfully race relation and equality laws have been put in place to address and which will hopefully prevent members of society from using such language and to enforce the message that such language is wholly unacceptable in any society or context. Yet this does not provide a full explanation of why the meaning and use of the term has shifted. Arguably greater social inclusion and integration and an awareness of the hurt that the use of the word causes, the meaning and use of the word 'niggers' has shifted social awareness and the word is no longer acceptable in any circumstance. Yet ironically within rap music and within some black cultural communities, black rap artists such as Ice-T and Lil' Kim have freely use the word 'nigger' in their lyrics. [9] However in order to take ownership and overturn the negative connotations, the word have been re-spelt as 'nigga'. To reclaim and own the word is intended to remove the negative stigma attached to it and signal it as a term of affirmation of racial identity and community, but it is also noteworthy that not all black people have embraced this as a positive step (Bright, 2013). The negative racial stereotyping of the word, connotations with slavery, memories of

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[9] I attended a show by the black American comedian Reginald D. Hunter in Bradford in May 2012. Part of his challenging but highly amusing style is to pose socially uncomfortable questions to specific members of the audience. His argument was to elaborate and argue to the wider audience in great detail why in his opinion, socially unacceptable phrases are actually a normal part of daily life and the only embarrassment is felt by those who are not immediately in line of the insult. For example he made a very eloquent case to support his argument that the word nigger/nigga was actually acceptable even if said by white people. His main point was that it is the context and intent of the word not the word itself. However as a white male, I would still feel very uncomfortable using the word in any context. I appreciate that I have probably removed all comedic elements from the account but it was not my intention to try and be funny. I shall leave that particular challenge for the comedians to make. Similar arguments of the re-claiming and ownership of previously negative words have made within the gay community. Through personal correspondence, a close friend of mine who is gay has discussed with me how the word 'queen' within the male gay community is now considered to be an affirmative term of affection. However he did inform me that it is usually meant slightly sarcastically, aimed at someone who is prone to exaggerated and dramatic outbursts of emotion.

less tolerant times in Western societies and its use by white supremacists are issues which are, for some members of the black community, too many obstacles to be ignored. For this thesis, an examination of the evolving meaning of music for both the individual and their social contexts is the pivotal for this study. Therefore I see no reason why music cannot be subjected to the same evolutionary principles.

5.8 Exposure and evolution of meaning and taste

There is an increased likelihood that adults will be exposed to different cultures and cultural experiences than the narrow personal and social identity concerns of adolescence. This may be as a result of travel, performance art or social community living. It was noted earlier that the meaning of certain types of music and the individual's reaction to the music and cultural practices associated with the music may be embedded in affirmative reactions or prejudice and negative assumptions. For example, it has been noted that negative racial attitudes are often associated with a dislike of music genres perceived as strong identification markers of that social group (Dixon *et al*, 2009; Reyna, Brandt & Viki, 2009; Rodríguez-Bailón *et al*, 2009; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002). However Rodríguez-Bailón *et al*, (2009) noted that these negative attitudes could be reversed through reinforcement of the positive aspects and exposure to the cultural practices and music of that community. The shifting meaning of the music through exposure and positive reinforcement and social interaction are the natural concerns of symbolic interactionism. With this in mind, it is possible individuals who go to university or start employment may be exposed to different cultures, music practices and different meanings. As a consequence their perceptions and level of preference of the music may shift accordingly. The meaning of music which may not have been a salient phenomenon of their younger identity due to its connotations to politics, culture, attitudes or simply because they disliked that particular style of music, may in later years become a salient element of his or her identity.

In addition, music styles often return back to high cultural status popularity. The resurgence of folk music to high cultural status is a recent example and so it is possible that music previously rejected may

have shifted because the individual has had a change in orientation towards the music. Therefore it is maintained that there is no good reason to reject the notion that (re)exposure at a later stage in their lives leads to a shift and evolution in meaning. In essence, music is a symbolic object of identity, both subject to evolution of meaning.

It is clear that the relationship between music as a symbolic object of the self and identity is complex and by no means is it possible to cover all aspects of this intrinsic relationship. Research into music identity covers a huge range of psychological and social determinants nationality, gender, performance, image management, social group delineation, personal relationships. Music exists as a broad, malleable symbolic representation of the self across all personal and social domains (De Nora, 2000; Frith, 1996; Martin, 1995). Few studies have explored the impact that social forces or lifespan events have on music preferences as symbolic representations of identity except DeNora, 2000, Hesmondhalgh, 2008; and Shankar *et al*, 2009. Both De Nora (2000) and Shankar *et al* (2009) noted how music is a durable object representative of one's sense of past identity that can be recovered and reflected upon at will to remember past identities and previous personal relationships. Kroger and Adair (2008) explored the significance of personal objects of elderly residents living in sheltered housing in New Zealand. These objects were seen by many as objects of their identity which were symbolic representations of personal memories and past events. The authors noted that residents who had lost items in a fire expressed the greatest sense of loss for items which represented past identities and events or those items which had been given to them by family members.

Shankar *et al* (2009) identified the impact that lifespan events and identity maturation have on the personal hierarchy and trajectory of music preferences. For example, the authors noted how one individual used to lead a self-defined hedonistic but he now wanted to settle down and have children. As a consequence of his identity development and maturation, he believed that this new maturity had led to a reduction in the level of engagement and a change in orientation towards the music linked to his

previous identity. The individual recognized the incongruity, between the two apparently opposing elements (for him anyway), to his self-views of his identity. On the one side the carefree, self-orientated identity has been superseded by the mature identity keen to take on greater responsibilities and settle down with a family. While the engagement with his previous music preferences had been reduced considerably, they are still an inherent symbolic representation of his identity.

Although while it was accepted that objective reality could never truly be captured, the aim of this study was to use identify and explore the influences that shaped individuals' early music preferences and then map out the trajectory of these preferences across the lifespan. One significant objective of the study was to identify the degree that these preferences had evolved and explore how the meaning and function of their early preferences compared to their current music taste palate. Consequently, it was great interest to examine how the meaning of their music had developed across the lifespan and to identify the specific influences or events which had triggered any change of preference. However it was accepted that the music palate of some individuals had not deviated at all since adolescence or at another significant time of their lives. To complete the circle, I aim to return to individuals' earlier definitions, meanings and uses of music to identify specific patterns within the taste trajectory. Delsing *et al* (2008) and Mulder *et al* (2009) noted that for late teenage adolescents, there was a shift away from mainstream popular music towards a narrowing of music tastes within counter-cultures. It is of great interest to map out the trajectory of tastes following this apparent period of stabilization of tastes. What happens after adolescence? Do adults return to their early music influences from parents, siblings and close friendship groups? How significant are unexpected negative lifespan events (relationship break up, illness, bereavement) and conversely positive events (meeting a new partner, cultural exposure) on the trajectory of music preferences? These questions have been largely ignored within social psychology but this qualitative study aims time to rectify this issue. Therefore the next chapter will present my methodology before I present the results and discussion of the study.

Chapter 6. Plan of Inquiry

6.1 Objectives

This next section is to present my methodological framework used to draw out individuals' experiences and memories of music from adolescence to present day. Of course for some, adolescence was perhaps just a short time ago and arguably these same individuals may still be considered to be in late adolescence. However one of the principal aims of the study was to explore, in line with the quantitative study, the trajectory of music preferences with an age range as wide as possible. In order to address the design limitations of the quantitative study I wanted to hear individual's experiences located with specific historical and cultural contexts. However, I was also acutely aware that music is often associated with very personal memories. Consequently, I understood that to explain the chain of events to a complete stranger, in an alien environment may itself present considerable difficulties. Therefore, it was my aim to make the interviews as relaxed as possible and make the participants feel as comfortable as possible before divulging very personal information. This is why the interviews were conducted on a very informal basis so that they could tell me their interpretation of their accounts in their words. Naturally from an epistemological perspective, manipulating the conversation so that the participants felt free to recall their interpretation of their own personal history conforms neatly to the pragmatic and humanistic perspective of my theoretical lens of symbolic interactionism. I intended to adhere to Cooley's (1902) maxim that all life to be examined could be understood in the real world, using their words.

There were significant ethical considerations which had to be taken into account with this study. In order to map out the trajectory of their preferences in relation to their own biographical history, the participants were informed that the interviews were to be conducted on a very informal basis, but they would be asked if there was any significant events, negative or positive, which may have led to a rejection of the music or induced significant negative emotions associated with the music. Nobody refused to partake in the interviews and I was genuinely surprised at the depth of personal detail that the

participants appeared willing to provide. I was acutely aware of the potential ethical difficulties that may have ensued, when discussing the relationship between music and identity. The strong association between music and personal relationships is well documented in musical texts, academic and non – academic literature alike. Thankfully nobody terminated an interview or declined to answer a single question. Although it was clear that some participants became quite emotional remembering past identities and relationships, all participants completed the interviews. I am very grateful to all the participants for their time and make the effort to attend for interview and discuss very personal information to a stranger.

In this chapter, I will present the theoretical reasons why I used a thematic analysis to analyse my data and reject alternative approaches. I will also present the demographic data, interview schedule and series of questions asked and identify how these evolved across the study. It was accepted that to attracting participants to attend for interview can be a notorious problem with interview research and therefore to replicate a similar broad age range of participants as the quantitative study presented an added level of problems.

6.2 Life as storied form

As noted earlier, the aim of this study was to explore individuals' accounts of experience and not to treat their accounts as a direct access to the truth. Holloway & Jefferson (2000) suggest that qualitative research cannot possibly provide the truth and that to suggest otherwise, is a false position to adopt.   My position is that the best this qualitative research could offer was an interpretation constructed from the interplay between my understanding of individuals' accounts and their constructions of the accounts drawn from their memories of experiences, events and the presentation of their selves.[10] Naturally my questions and interpretations of their answers and participants' answers to the questions were open to

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[10] I have used the term account though I could have just as easily used the word narrative. Because I have not carried out an in-depth narrative research on the constructions on the self through cultural artefacts and to avoid any confusion, I will use the term account from this point onwards.

subjective bias and of course I had no way of verifying if their accounts are true or not, nor was it of interest to me either way. Holloway and Jefferson (2000) reinforce this position to suggest that qualitative methodological research techniques can be inherently problematic. In short the authors draw caution to analysis of accounts because there are numerous other issues that are an instinctive, intrinsic part of everyday life that lay claim to influencing how participants respond to observation or the interviewer's questions which the researcher in their quest for data, may unwittingly ignore. In effect these potential influences may not necessarily have been identified by the researcher as having an effect on their data analysis and interpretation. As the authors suggest:

'Primarily this is because of the widespread assumptions in the [qualitative] tradition, by ethnographers, participant observers and interviewers alike, that their participants are 'telling it like it is' […] and are willing, and able to 'tell' this to a stranger interviewer […] Neither selves nor accounts are transparent in our view. Treating people's own accounts as unproblematic flies in the face of what is known about people's less clear-cut, more confused and contradictory relationship to knowing and telling about themselves. In everyday informal dealings with each other, we do not take each other at face value, unless we are totally naïve; we question, disagree, bring in counter-examples, interpret, notice hidden agendas. (Holloway & Jefferson, 2000: 2-3).

Thus I was aware that individuals' accounts may have been influenced by a degree of self-preservation and image management. Manipulation of the self presented through an account is an entirely natural phenomenon. Accounts are never a true version of reality because it is very likely that these responses are naturally tainted with personal bias, image management and self-protection and are often presented as 'a storied form' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). Embellishment and fabrication was to be a natural element of personal accounts. The notion that past selves are manipulated may be traced back to Mead's emergent self and the creation of fictitious past selves to display the present self. Mead's concept of the manipulation of the past is one of his most difficult theories to grasp, largely because it is clearly not the finished article and the ideas are drawn from a few pages of notes collected posthumously (Dewey, 1931; Shibutani, 1988). However one of the central tenets of Mead's (1929) dimensions of time and self noted

that presentations of the past self should always be seen as actions of the present. The past is the present in representational form. Manipulation of the self through music to enhance a particular image, to present a specific identity to me, the stranger is well documented in music psychology literature (Hansen & Hansen, 1991: Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006, 2007). I will however discuss this point in greater detail in the results and discussion section because it holds significant importance on my interpretation of the relationship between music preferences and identity saliency.

The aim of this qualitative study is to provide a deeper insight on the findings of my quantitative study, and so I will define the theoretical grounding upon which my methodology was based. I will discuss the methods used to select my participants, plus I will justify my reasons for rejecting alternative methodologies. In addition I will discuss the use of semi-structured interviews and the six stages of thematic analysis as set out by Braun & Clarke, (2006 & 2013) to identify and construct through coding and reflexive thinking the development of key themes to arise out of the data. Through my theoretical lens of symbolic interactionist lens, I explored how individuals' accounts of their music preferences have developed and expanded across the lifespan and in turn how the meaning of this music has evolved accordingly. . Finally, I will explore some of the developments which occurred following the first few interviews, which in turn led to a shift in the angle of questioning. On reflection of the data and previous studies, I returned to the findings of my quantitative data set to explore some of the key themes and results.

The focus of this study was on the development and trajectory of music as significant objects of the self. This is not a narrative study on the different presentation of the self either through cultural artifacts neither is it a thorough chronological narrative of their life story. The main subject of interest in this study is to explore individuals' understanding and shifting orientation of their cultural artifacts across the lifespan. The focus on the evolving meaning of significant objects, symbolic to one's identity is the main reason why I chose to use semi-structured interviews and a thematic analysis rather than an in-depth

exploration of their narrative or constructions of the self through cultural objects. It was also an

exploration to determine the causes for the shift in preference (if this was indeed the case) and how

individuals' orientation towards their music had evolved across the lifespan.

6.3 Rejection of alternative methodologies

Narrative Analysis

The theoretical underpinnings of my methodology will justify my reasons to select a thematic analysis of

individuals' accounts rather than a narrative analysis. The main aim of the thematic analysis was to

elucidate individuals' meanings and changing orientations towards their music preferences. On the

surface, a narrative approach may seem the logical choice to establish the social practices of music

preferences of individuals within their own historical and cultural frameworks. It is accepted that some

researchers albeit positioned inside or outside of symbolic interactionism may argue that a narrative

analysis of individual accounts, of 'the real world', is the more appropriate choice of methodological

approach rather than a thematic analysis. However, after a great deal of consideration, I decided that the

narrative research approach was not for this study. When I carried out extensive enquiry into the

different frameworks of narrative research, I found a huge amount of very confusing and contradictory

positions located within one apparent field of enquiry. On closer inspection there are a multitude of

different strands to narrative research and not all originate from similar epistemological or

methodological positions. I'm sure that there are many narrative researchers who would argue that

narrative analysis is the most natural host for my research problem; however, it would not be an

understatement to say that my attempts to understand and define the parameters of narrative analysis.

Trying to position my research within this fluid evasive paradigm caused a huge amount of frustration

and time wasted. It is abundantly clear that the term narrative research holds a multitude of apparently

contradictory meanings (Georgakopoulou, 2007).   The path to discover the right tool to discover

emergent meanings within narrative research is most certainly obfuscated by the variety of different

epistemological and methodological positions. Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson (2009: 458) have

recognized the near zealotry and conflicting views held by different narrative researchers, which can only serve to cause confusion except for the most experienced and knowledgeable of narrative researchers:

Perhaps because of the different research traditions of people working in life story and narrative research, there is considerable disagreement over quite what narrative research is, or indeed, should be! This is a serious problem for those of us who would want this approach to grow, as students (and indeed academics) will find themselves frustrated by technical debates and arguments and an apparent lack of consensus about the methods to be employed.

The authors have also suggested that if a broader perspective of narrative research is taken, then definitions of narrative research may be divided between analysis of content and narrative practices. Analysis of content is an examination of the bigger picture of how individuals give meaning to their experiences which fits the aims of this study. In contrast, narrative practices is to focus on the creation of a narrative through a micro-level discourse analysis of particular speech patterns, colloquialisms, grammar and organization of language (e.g. Riessman, 1993). An understanding or analysis of these linguistic devices was of no interest at all.

Phenomenology

An alternative narrative approach considered was a phenomenological analysis of individuals' life stories. A phenomenological analysis of individuals' meanings and experiences of cultural artifacts could be seen as highly relevant to this study. After all it should be noted that the central arguments of phenomenology sit very close to some schools of symbolic interactionism. This in itself is probably of no great surprise. William James, considered to be one of the founders of the social philosophy pragmatism alongside Mead, Dewey and Cooley in Chicago (widely accepted as the Chicago school of sociology), was instrumental in developing a flexible theory which took an interpretive study of human experience as one of its core values. The developments of the Chicago school led to the foundations of symbolic interactionism. However James' definitions of the self, the 'I' as the centre of consciousness, have led to many researchers (e.g. Baldwin, 1986; Denzin, 1992, Plummer, 1991) to label him as a phenomenologist. James believed that the 'I', the principle part of the self interacted with the self as an

object or the 'me' and that an individual had as many selves as relationships that the individual knew

(Denzin, 2005). However there is one important distinction between James' self and the Mead self and

that is that Mead's self exists in the real world and not solely in the mind as James and Cooley believed.

The Mead definition of the self is the one that is considered crucial for this thesis. In other words, for

James and adherents of phenomenology the self exists in the mind but the self and the mind are not part

of the body but 'out there' as part of the social world interacting with the world through streams of

consciousness. Consciousness of experience and the mind thus exists not as an inherent aspect of

individual identity but 'always already turned out on to the world through our intentional relationship

with the world' (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009: 388). Phenomenology in short promotes mind

dualism, which is an anathema to Mead.

Phenomenological / Cultural Interpretive theory of symbolic interactionism
The interpretive/cultural theory model of symbolic interactionism holds particular resonance with

phenomenology. To delve a little deeper, phenomenology is largely concerned with the study of

'experience' and individual's perceptions of the world as they see it. Denzin (1989: 10) astutely

observed the similarity between phenomenology and the interpretive school of symbolic interactionism.

He noted that:

 'The *interpretive* version of the perspective…attempts to make the worlds of lived experience directly accessible to the reader.

Interpretive interactionists endeavor to capture the voices, emotions, and actions of those studied. They focus on those life

experiences which radically alter and shape the meanings persons give themselves and their experiences.'

However, a cultural interpretive analysis was rejected primarily because the phenomenology researcher

constructs the experiences through the use of the participants' use of language, which was not the focus

of interest within this study. Secondly because phenomenology supports mind dualism which runs

against the concept of a multifaceted sense of identity that includes biological as well as social elements of

identity.

6.4 Methodology

Interview processes

A series of heuristic interviews was considered be the best approach to understand how individuals'

music preferences were formed and how the course of trajectory of these preferences had altered. I was

very interested to explore the background social settings in which music preferences were developed. An

ethnographic observation was clearly impractical, so interviews were selected as the best approach to

explore how individuals selected and used their music. Inherent within much of qualitative study there is

always the risk that I may analyse just anecdotal accounts that simply lead to nowhere (Gubrium &

Holstein, 2002; Silverman, 2005). Therefore one of the primary aims of the interviews was to construct

an experience out of participants' accounts and my interpretation of that experience. In essence both

parties involved in the process are active in the construction of the interview experience (Gubrium &

Holstein, 2002). Thus the data derived from the interviews which would be used as part of my

profoundisation model (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009) to enlighten and augment my previous

quantitative study.

Yet it is important to note that there is one important methodological issue which relates to my earlier

reasons for rejecting narrative analysis; the interviews were used and treated as a conduit to individuals'

experiences and not as actively constructed narratives (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Silverman, 2005). In

other words, through the subtle skills of interaction, questioning, consolidation and verification, I was

able to create a position whereby I could interpret the individual's accounts not as an example of reality

or the truth, but simply an interpretation of their personal and social worlds and to interpret the

meanings of their objects in relation to his or her social situations within their historical and cultural

contexts. These accounts are ultimately their interpretation to my questions placed before them but also

mediated between social and personal expectations of interviewer and interviewee. In my opinion, to be

invited into the individual's own personal and social spaces is an absolute privilege. Thus it was

considered highly important to develop a rapport with the individuals who had kindly agreed to attend

for interview. Yet because the interviews were to be held on a face to face basis, there were several factors which had to be taken into account which may either hinder or aid the elucidation of information.

The two way processes inherent within any interview are neither neutral nor without danger. In essence my questions are part of the process through which their accounts are constructed. As identified in the introduction chapter, inherent biological and social determinants play a crucial role on the flow of conversation. These factors such as gender, age, ethnic background, physical appearance and of course other adjuncts to my identity such as my clothes, watch and shoes (Dittmar, 2012); apply to both me and the interviewee. Yet it is clear that these factors play an unwitting role in steering both question and response. It should also be noted that both question and answer can be fraught with dangers of miscomprehension and assumptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: Soss, 1996). I tried to pre-empt some of the potential dangers. Such as how do I know that my interpretation of their meaning is the same as theirs? I was aware that to a large number of undergraduates and postgraduates there was an age gap of over twenty years. The socio-cultural and technological context of my adolescence and early adulthood are very different to today. How do know that I have truly understood their accounts? If it is evident to the individual that I am not familiar with their social experiences or music styles is there a danger that the account they provide me as a middle-aged white male may differ from one given to another researcher closer to their own age, historical or cultural background? Is there a possibility that I could I lose any rapport developed so far? Will they become bored, humour me or terminate the interview? To overcome some of these obstacles, I decided to be as honest as possible with the participants to admit my ignorance. In addition, if it was clearly evident that I was unfamiliar with the use of language or music style, I would allow the individual more time to explain and explore their experiences, to broaden my own horizons. The action taken was not necessarily a transfer of power away from me but a malleable action to aid the development and consolidation of the relationship between me and the participant. As a consequence of these concerns, I made it a mission statement of mine that I would try to clarify every

ambiguity with the participants, even at the expense of stopping the flow of the interview. Validity and

reliability were considered paramount to this study especially as I was the sole researcher. Silverman

(2005) identifies that these two principles can be more difficult to achieve without suspicions of

anecdotalism being raised. For these reasons not only did I try to clarify any ambiguity at the time of

interview but in addition, all interviews were recorded, fully transcribed and securely stored on an MP3

player to allow for further clarification without the need to recall the participant.

6.5 Alternative methodology

An alternative approach to explore the evolved meaning of music preferences available to me was to see

individuals' music collections, ultimately for practical reasons that approach was discarded. The main

reason was because of the physical difficulties that this may have entailed if the individuals had brought a

selection of vinyl or CDs. Greasley *et al*, (2013) have carried out an in-depth qualitative exploration

individual's personal music collection, as means to explore the relationship between the breadth and

current preferred styles of music and their identity. Yet in that study, interviews were carried out in the

participant's home environment which lends neatly to a discussion on the range of styles available. For

this study however, interviews were carried out in an office at Lancaster University and therefore there

were some obvious limitations to the selection brought. Obviously, digitally formatted music would not

have been an issue; but also it was of concern that the interview would focus on these select items rather

than the broader picture of their music across the lifespan. It was deemed unlikely that in the time slot

available, a discussion of music preferences over a media device such as smart phone, tablet or laptop

would necessarily gain a full insight. In other words, it was suspected that individuals would mainly

discuss the current or latest music play lists reflecting their current identity saliency, mood or emotion.

This focus may come at the expense of further discussion of the trajectory of music preferences across

the lifespan which was an important issue for the interviews. In addition if individuals' music selection

was to reflect their current identity saliency, it was considered highly likely that a different identity

saliency or mood, their salient play list and discussion of their preferences may be entirely different.

Interestingly, a few participants were very keen to show me their playlists on their smart phones and MP-3 players, which was not discouraged. As noted earlier participants' input to the interview process as considered crucial to the interview process and to aided in the establishment of a rapport with the participants. Those individuals, who did show me their current smart phone or MP3 playlists, were usually keen to show me a particular playlist designed for mood management or to remember a particular event such as a holiday or memories from home and friends. However, when I asked them to show me or discuss with me their other playlists, they seemed less than forthcoming. It is thus likely that the playlist which was shown to me was the identity which they wished to present to me of how they wanted to be seen and seen by me (Hansen & Hansen, 1991; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). The fact that they seemed less keen to show me playlists beyond the presented list was interesting and it may have an impact on future ethnographic research on music preferences. Their actions may be due to identity preservation and maintenance of self-esteem issues, but it is also accepted that this notion is just supposition.

Although there was one participant who was keen to show me her collection CDs; it is also pertinent because it highlights how her salient sexual orientation identity is inherently fused with her music identity. Yet it also highlights how a discussion on the trajectory of music preferences mediated through visual inspection of these tastes can become sidetracked about one issue.

Justine (her choice of pseudonym) university lecturer aged 36, wanted to show me her total music collection which existed solely on one shelf in her office. She had no CDs at home and did or rather could not download music on to her smart phone due to her own admission of ignorance of how to do so. This collection consisted of less than twenty CDs by a just a few artists from the indie-rock and girl rock genres, whose oeuvre was largely popular fifteen to twenty years ago in the 1990s. The limited taste range indicated that her musical palate had remained largely static from late adolescence/ young adulthood. When I raised this point with her, she agreed and admitted that her preferred style of

clothing had not progressed either. Further exploration and discussion of how her music tastes had developed and crystallized (Delsing *et* al, 1998; Holbrook & Schindler, 1989; Mulder *et al*, 2008) revealed that to her, her narrow taste of preferred music was a symbolic representation of her lesbian identity. This was the music that she liked when she 'came out' aged seventeen as an openly gay mixed race individual and had continually re-committed herself to this narrow selection. She said that when she came out, a few friends commented that she would probably buy a lot of k. d. lang albums, which she mildly objected to then, because she felt this was to pander to stereotyping of tastes.[11] Even so, a friend bought her one of her albums on tape cassette, which she accepted but in recent years she had rarely played it. Justine admitted that she used to say that she liked it to her peers, even though it was not to her taste. The k.d. lang album was for her, a symbolic representation of past identity which she found now to be slightly embarrassing. She was embarrassed that she had wilted under a slight degree of peer pressure, whereas now she was much more confident in who she was, what her identity was. I asked her to imagine her old self now and what would she say to her if she (the old self) could appear; she replied that she would tell her to be strong and be who you want to be and not pander to peer pressure. She admitted that her partner often laughed at her 'out of date' retro girl-rock tastes positioned firmly in the late 1990s, but in contrast her partner was much more open to new tastes and ideas. Justine accepted that she enjoyed listening to new and varied tastes but they were just a small fleeting part of her identity. They belonged to her partner's cultural identity to a far greater degree than her own. Her comments suggested that she was open to explore new tastes but she had strong commitments to her past and current identity with no strong desire to change.

Justine's account was very interesting because she demonstrated the strong relationship between music and identity. Her identity was in-process but it was in a constant state of renewal and recommitment to her current self-view of her identity. The music was a representation of the period of her life when she

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[11] The Canadian artist k.d lang is an openly gay / lesbian activist singer song writer of the country/folk rock genre.

confirmed and established of her sexual orientation identity; her past identity as a young university undergraduate; her temporal-cultural identity as an undergraduate in the late 1990s; her current professional identity as an academic and her identity as a fan of the late 1990s indie-rock music scene; and finally her identity as a partner in a same-sex relationship. However despite the wealth of information that Justine gave me, I decided not to pursue this approach with any other participants. The main reason for this decision was because, with other participants who talked through their playlists, I found it difficult to maintain a flowing conversation and as noted earlier too long was spent on one specific period of the lives rather than the whole trajectory which was the main aim of the study. In addition, I felt as if both of us were talking to each other through the physical handling of the object. Consequently, although no further attempt was made to encourage participants to bring in or demonstrate their preferences, I was however more than willing to discuss the object or playlist if the participants were keen to show me their preferences in this way.

6.6 Methods

Once ethical approval had been ratified by the ethics committee at Lancaster University, an advert inviting participants to take part in interviews to explore on the development and trajectory of music preferences was sent to all undergraduate and postgraduate students across the university. An advert was also placed in the on-line Lancaster University newsletter which is sent to all alumni, as well as present and past staff. The on-line newsletter has links with the social media sites Facebook and Twitter. Participants who responded to the advert were invited via e-mail to participate in the interviews which were held in an office within Lancaster University. The interview with Justine was the only interview carried out away from the office. In all interviews I was the sole researcher.

On arrival to the office, participants were greeted and informed that the interview was entirely voluntary and that all data was to be kept confidential in accordance with the guidelines as set out by Lancaster University ethics committee. Participants were also informed that if at any point they felt uncomfortable

or wished to withdraw they could terminate the interview at any time by leaving the office without any objection or questions on my part.

In order to set a relaxed tone, light refreshments of food and drink were provided. Participants were told that they were free to help themselves to these at any stage and the interviews were to be conducted using an informal approach with the use of everyday normal language. The reason that the interviews were conducted on an informal basis was to maintain their comfort and to make the discussion as natural as possible. The chairs were positioned at ninety degrees to each other to avoid constant face to face contact, which may have been potentially interpreted as intimidating. I introduced the MP-3 player and asked them if they had any reservations about its use, nobody did. The room temperature was set appropriately for comfort to maintain both alertness and warmth. Of course, it was accepted that the interview not an entirely natural situation, to discuss one's music preferences to a relative stranger, but the aim was to maintain their ease and comfort throughout the interview. My opening statement was to provide a very brief outline and reiteration of the purpose of the interview which was to explore the trajectory of their music preferences, to outline the expected length of time and forewarn them of potentially difficult questions.

Ethical issues
An information sheet was supplied which re-iterated the purpose of the study to explore the development, function and evolution of their music preferences across their lifespan. It was also explained that I would ask questions about their personal relationships and social upbringing and but they were free to pass on any questions without further enquiry from me. I explained that although it was unlikely, it was possible that the interview may raise some difficult issues or painful memories. If they felt that they needed to talk to a healthcare professional, then the telephone number of the appropriate counsellor (staff or student) was made available to all participants.

If they agreed to take part in the interview, all participants were required to sign a consent form. They were asked to provide a pseudonym for purposes of anonymity so that no data could be traced back to them. The pseudonym was entirely their choice and could relate to a name of a relative, their middle forename, pet, animal or celebrity. If they chose an ambiguous name where gender classification was not obvious I bracketed the letters (M or F) after the pseudonym on the demographic spreadsheet (Appendix G). The only other demographic I collected, was their age. The semi-structured interviews were recorded on an MP3 audio device positioned between myself and the participant. As audio devices are such a ubiquitous aspect of daily life that I considered it would allow a natural flowing conversation to take place even within the slightly false setting of a research interview.

Reliability & Validity
All interviews were recorded on an MP3 player and stored securely for future analysis. Each recording was played at least twice. The first hearing was to identify the salient issues in line with my research questions and create codes. The second recording was for transcription and if there were any important or relevant quotes, a third hearing was used o check the accuracy of the transcription.

In light of the possible obstacles to accuracy, which may have included inherent and unavoidable issues such as age or cultural differences, I was not averse to admitting any ignorance or gap in knowledge of particular music styles. One of the primary aims of the study as for participants to evoke their past experiences of music and so it was considered crucial to be knowledgeable and aware of the many different styles and experiences involved. For example, I was largely ignorant of the music style dubstep and nu-metal. I carried out my own research to gather important information and thus tailored the questions accordingly.

6.7 Interview Schedule (Appendix K)
Once the consent form had been signed and the participants signaled that they were happy to proceed, I reiterated the main objectives of the interviews, to explore the trajectory of their music preferences from

adolescence to the present day. I confirmed with the participants that if they decided at any stage not to continue then they could leave at any stage. I explained the overall framework of the interviews. The first question was to ask the participants what sort of music they had listened to around the age of eleven, when most children start secondary school. This is perhaps a rather obvious question but one which I felt would be useful as an icebreaker and establish a rapport with the participants. It seemed logical to follow a largely chronological method of enquiry, which I verbally supported. If participants lost their train of thought, I had a series of prompts written down but these were followed very loosely. I wanted to maintain a semblance of a natural conversation as much as possible. They were then asked about the influences that shaped their preferences during their teenage years and how had these differed from the early years. It was of interest to determine if their influences had shifted from their parents or siblings to their peers or media. We discussed the importance of different musical attributes. For example, in adolescence was it the musical technical ability of the artists that was important, the music videos, the lyrics with a particular message, the sense of community with other fans or just simple adoration. Participants were then asked about the influence of social groups, their own social group membership and the music styles which were considered to be high or low status according to the socially constructed rules of the group. The influences of peer pressure and body awareness were discussed and the influence of the 'in-group' preferred music styles. This line of questioning explored Social Integration Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) to determine how these factors had impacted on their music preferences. We discussed if at present, there were any music styles which they could not listen to because of a traumatic event or loss of a relationship, or because of bullying. I then explored the differences between their music tastes from adolescence to today. It was of interest to determine if there had been a shift in the trajectory or function of the music and if so what had triggered the change. I wanted to determine if a shift in the trajectory, orientation or function of the music had been triggered by specific personal or social forces. Irrespective of whether there was a shift or not, I also explored how they felt had changed since those days. How had their sense of identity evolved over the years? Did they still feel as if they

were the same person as they had been then? Had their values, politics and their sense of identity changed?

After the discussion on the trajectory of preferences, I explored how they used music as part of normal daily activity. We discussed how many hours a day they listened to music and on what devices. I also asked if they had a hierarchy of musical format. For example, I suggested that some people saw vinyl as having a superior status to CDs and downloading music and I wanted to know their opinion. Participants were also encouraged to discuss how important their music was today compared to adolescence. In particular, we explored whether certain styles of music had become less or more important in their daily lives since adolescence. Finally in relation to the daily uses of music, I also asked about how often and the manner in which they used the internet in relation to their music palate. Had they used the internet to search for back catalogues of favourite artists or had they used it to search for new music styles. It was of interest how and why individuals used the internet and whether these cultural practices had increased over recent years. These particular questions were largely aimed at the older participants who had been at least in their mid-twenties when the internet had become relevant in the mid 1990s. Before the interview had come to an end, to achieve a sense of closure, I asked the participants if there was anything they wanted to ask me about either the interview or my own preference trajectory.

6.8 Analysis

Rudestam & Newton's (2007) prophetic warning should have alerted me to the dangers that lie ahead. The authors forewarn the reader that 'describing the data analysis in the Method chapter of the dissertation may be more problematic for those considering qualitative research than it is for those undertaking conventional quantitative research'. They did not disappoint. Therefore the aim of this next section is to explain the reasons why a thematic analysis tool was selected and then I will discuss the reliability and validity content for my study.

Reflexive Questioning

After the first ten interviews I reviewed my questions and data and removed any questions which were clearly ineffective or inappropriate. For example, Christenson & Peterson (1988) identified that female adolescents are more likely than males to select music for its romantic lyrical content and that they gave higher ratings to soul, dance/ disco and popular styles of music than male counterparts. The authors also noted that gender created differences with how individuals used their music. Females were more likely to use music to management their moods than adolescent males, but males were more likely to use music to create an image to appear tough or rebellious (Bleich *et al*, 1991). However explorations of gender differences which may explain how individuals used music in adolescence or in school years, failed to provide any useful data. I am not aware of any obvious cause for the difference however it is possible that he difference may be due to a combination of factors such as temporal, cultural factors or technical advancements with advent of the internet and digital downloads. I will discuss these issues in greater detail in the results and discussion section. Secondly exploration of the function of music produced very little useful data. Their answers appeared to be relevant to their current salient identity or recent events but few could expand beyond this narrow field. In light of these findings, the questions were removed from the interviews. Naturally, as the interviews progressed I became more confident and adept at drawing out data. The first ten or so interviews were definitely a learning process for me.

Coding & Thematic analysis

The reason to use a simple thematic analysis was partly based on my epistemological position of symbolic interactionism which rejects philosophical argument over individual experience (Denzin, 1992; Plummer, 1991). It is evident that philosophical grounding pervades many qualitative methodological and analytical tools. As a consequence deep discussions on the merits or power of Husserl and Ricoeur, Heidegger, Kant, Bahktin or Foucault were of no interest to me. Yet it would also appear that philosophical argument is the *sine qua non* of much qualitative search. Wertz *et al* (2011: 80) reinforce this apparent absolute when they suggest that:

An important part of conducting qualitative research is literacy concerning the philosophical assumptions underlying the research. A strong tradition in philosophy justifies the importance and even priority of qualitative research based on the characteristics of the human being.

Clearly no adherents of a neo-Meadian reading of symbolic interactionism here then.[12] However despite my attempts to maintain a determined shift away from linguistic or philosophical argument, there appeared to be few options, as most analytical tools were embedded in dry theoretical or linguistic frameworks. An obvious disparity had arisen between my theoretical lens and a requirement to select an appropriate analytical tool. Fortunately thematic analysis is a malleable tool which does not require a particular language set or theoretical framework to explore human activity was extremely useful (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). However this is not to suggest that it cannot be used from a specific theoretical or linguistic set, but Braun & Clarke (2006) suggest that it may be an ideal tool for those approaching their problem from a specific theoretical position. This notion appeared to hold particular relevance to my study.

Braun & Clarke's six steps to Thematic Analysis
According to Braun & Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is based upon six simple recursive steps common to many research analysis tools but without the obligation of a theoretical or linguistic framework. It is a self-explanatory tool which gives back ownership of the analysis tool back to the researcher. I decided not to analyse the data by computer analysis tool as I did not want to become overburdened with unfamiliar technology and there was a risk that the computer programme may not recognize the meaning of the data which is fundamental to my study (Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

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[12] I am aware that Kathy Charmaz has written extensively on the effectiveness of grounded theory as a tool for symbolic interactionism, but as I noted earlier, there are many schools within this broad paradigm. Please see Denzin (1992) for further discussion and assessment of grounded theory within symbolic interactionism.

Stage 1. Familiarisation of the data. This step was about understanding my data. Reviewing the questions after the first five interviews and adapting them. I reworded some of the questions to try and obtain better answers.

Stage 2. Coding (Appendix K). Coding involved analyzing and repeatedly re-analyzing the data. All analysis was done by jotting down words and ideas from the interviews and reflecting on them to identify any consistent pattern emerged. Braun & Clarke (2006) suggest the use of a visual diagram to draw together the ideas into a coherent and logical pattern. I found it difficult to visualize data and preferred to make lists and codes to identify similarity. Many were amalgamated, discarded or adapted into different code words. I reflected on the data to develop the early formation of an overarching set of themes. Some themes were analysed but discarded or broken up. For example, one of the early themes was 'gender as function'. This theme was developed in response to previous research which has suggested that female listeners are more likely than male listeners to listen to less aggressive music or listen to the lyrics for the romantic element (Christenson & Peterson, 1988; Hargreaves & North, 1997). On reflection, this line of questioning and theme was discarded because most female participants were either very embarrassed or appeared nonplussed at the question. Therefore this question was adapted to discuss music as a symbol of their sexuality, sexual orientation or feminine identity and coded accordingly. Codes were recursively analysed and reworded until the development of strong themes emerged.

Stage 3. Searching for themes. After the first ten interviews I made tentative steps to draw out overarching themes from the data.

Stage 4. Reviewing the themes. It became quickly apparent that themes titles such as 'trajectory' and 'object' were too broad and weak to capture the different nuances of the data. Therefore these were reworded and reanalysed to fulfill the requirements. For example the theme 'trajectory' was broken

down into two themes, the first examined early influences on the trajectory from expected family members and peers and the other examined influences and triggers that affected their preferences as an independent young adult. These triggers include expected and unexpected disequilibrating events such as going to university, the development of new social and friendship groups.

Stage 5. Defining and naming of the themes. After analyzing and re-analyzing the data I drew together some of my initial ideas for themes t determine if these themes created an overall broad encompassing theme. Has my data set truly captured the essence of my participants' answers? Are my themes too broad or too narrow? Have my research questions been answered. Examination of my final themes as set out in Appendix K reveals that there are overlaps but that is perhaps to be expected.

Stage 6. Writing up. This stage is self-explanatory. In total 13 main themes were elucidated but there is simply not the space to explore each theme in depth. Therefore I the next chapter I present the results of some of the main salient themes. I also draw on my quantitative study to explore any correlations and consistencies that may emerge from both data sets.

Chapter 7. Qualitative study-Results & Discussion

But now old friends are acting strange,
They shake their heads, they say I've changed,
Well something's lost, but something's gained in living every day'.
Joni Mitchell, *Both Sides Now*, 1969.

Sharon (42) '[Aged 17] I'd be in the darkness and think about suicide listening to the Cocteau Twins and now I'm listening to them doing the ironing, that's middle age for you (laughs)'.

7.1 Objectives

In this chapter, I will present the results of my qualitative study to explore the development and changing trajectory of music preferences in relation to self-views on identity development and changing personal and social relationships. The arguments presented are drawn from the thematic analysis and coding of the data. The main themes ascertained from the analysis and examined through a neo-Meadian symbolic interactionist lens have identified that preferences are not only symbolic representations of the self but are also subject to evolution. In addition I will refer back to the findings of the quantitative study to identify definitive patterns which exist across both studies and any obvious discrepancies. It is understood that these are two different population groups and therefore no firm conclusions can be made. However, it is possible to make strong inferences based upon the two groups in relation to age and the trajectory of music preferences.

The first theme under discussion following a breakdown of demographic data is to explore the impact of a shift in cultural contexts. Lancaster University typical of most UK has a significant international student population. I also discuss an unexpected theme which arose out of the thematic analysis, the exo-identity. The exo-identity, a highly symbolic element of identity relates to participants' strong preferences for a music style that has no obvious historical, cultural or temporal context to the individual. For example, some participants have a strong identity with a period or style of music which is

not related to parents' tastes and was popular decades before they were born. Others have borrowed

identities from either a totally different culture. Individuals appear to assimilate these historical,

temporal or cultural identities into their own identity and adopt the clothing and hairstyle style of the

exo-identity. For example, Elizabeth (19) has a strong symbolic identity with Korean and Japanese pop

music, or as she called it 'cheesy dance pop', but there is no obvious influence from either parent's music

tastes or cultural exposure to the music. Other exo-identities include a strong symbolic preference for

1980s music or 1950s rockabilly music or smooth/ American jazz music from the same era.

My final area will be to demonstrate the evidence would appear to suggest that for some individuals, the

trajectory of music preferences is not only fluid and transitionary but may also involve a cyclical re-

examination and return to previously rejected or discarded tastes. I highlight another unexpected but

important finding which challenges the relevance of the cultural snob (Atkinson, 2011; Bourdieu, 1984)

versus the omnivore/ univore argument (Bryson, 1996; Peterson & Kern, 1996; Peterson & Simkus,

1992, van Eijck, 2001). The data from this study supports Savage & Gayo's (2011) argument that in

popular music and classical music there are two types of omnivorous listener, the discriminatory expert

and the voracious consumer. However I argue that their analysis needs further exploration. It would

appear from this study that the expert or the aficionado as I prefer can exist in all music fields not just in

classical music or popular music alone and that individuals can shift from low level mainstream to

aficionado and vice versa. In addition, I argue that there are two types of aficionado, the broad explorer

and the narrow taste aficionado. The broad explorer is knowledgeable about an artist, group or

particular style of music, but he or she also likes a broad selection of music styles and likes to be

challenged with new types of music. In contrast the narrow taste aficionado is as the name suggests

someone whose tastes are narrow and they are extremely knowledgeable about the one or two styles of

music but have little interest exploring other music styles or artists, outside their field of expertise. I

also challenge the notion that the attainment of aficionado status excludes all other types of music. As

will become evident, several individuals were aficionados in one field of music or artist but also had low

mainstream interests in other areas. It was also evident that both types of aficionados are high level users

of the internet and the high status radio stations to explore and engage with their preferred music.

I also argue that the non-expert mainstream listener may also be divided along similar lines. The main

difference between the broad mainstream and the narrow mainstream listener is the type of radio station

they listen to or engagement with their own music. The broad mainstream listener is open to most types

of music whereas the narrow mainstream tends to stick to one radio station or only play a certain artist/

group at home or in the car. Therefore, I will present a breakdown of the participants of my study

before the analysis of my data in a systematic fashion. The final section will include a discussion on the

results.

7.2 Participants

It is usual practice within a qualitative study to introduce the participants through a short introductory

biographical history before the results are presented (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009; Rudestam &

Newton, 2007). However, due to the large number of participants (n=62), this task would be difficult

to achieve, so the relevant participants' biographical history and accounts will be introduced, analysed

and interpreted according to the important themes which have arisen following on from the thematic

analysis as set out by Braun & Clarke (2006, 2013). Their accounts will be used to support, enlighten

and enhance my belief in my argument that music preferences are indeed symbolic representations of the

self and are subject to evolution and shifting orientation or function across the lifespan due to an

interplay between identity maturation and lifespan experiences. A graph presenting the age group list of

the participants is provided below with a breakdown of demographic data. A full list of participants'

pseudonyms, age and nationality are provided in Appendix G. Where there may be a degree of

ambiguity of gender with the pseudonym, I have clarified with the letter M or F. In addition all

participants are British unless specified.

A total of 62 participants attended and agreed to give their consent to be interviewed on my study exploring the trajectory of music preferences. The ages ranged from 18 to 73 (X=28.6; *SD*= 10.39), with 38 female participants (n=38) and 24 male (n=24). The number of younger participants aged 18-24=37 (60%) and older participants aged 25-73=25 (40%).
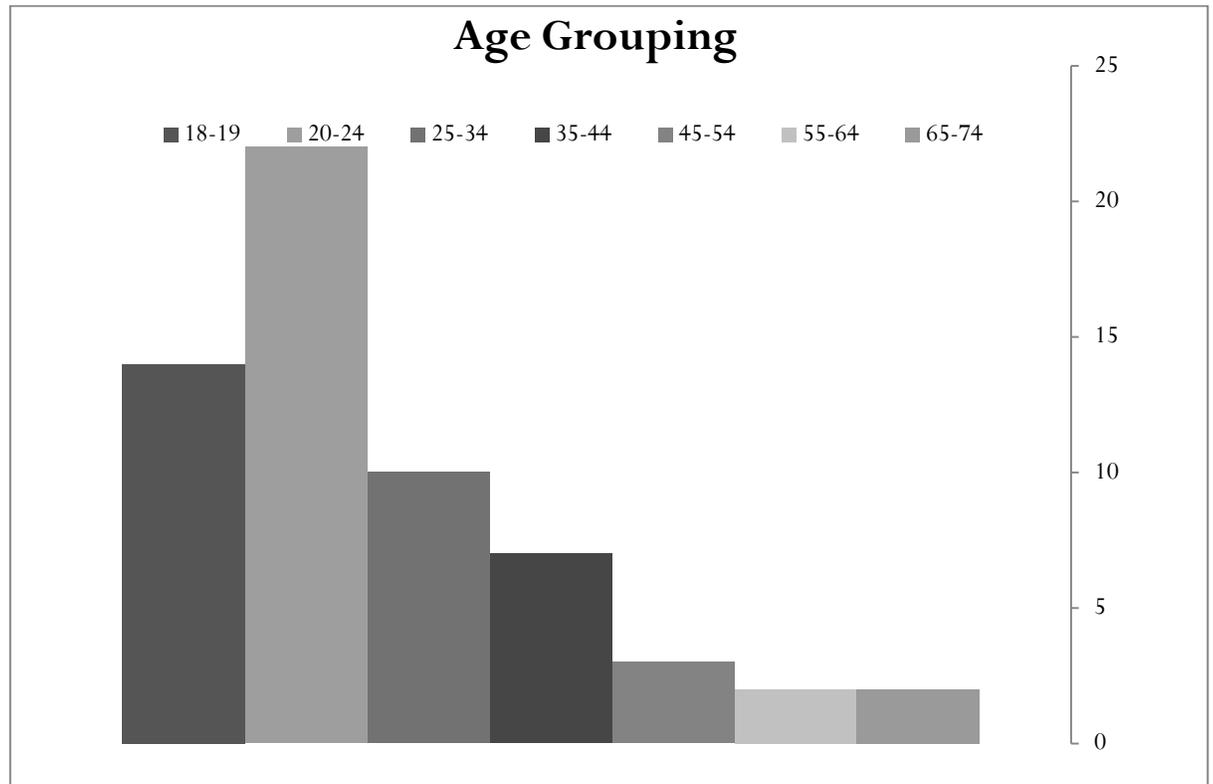
Figure 2. Age grouping of population (n=62)

7.3 Exposure to a new culture

As expected, the largest proportion of nationalities was made up from Western nations. [13] This group of nations was defined as Great Britain, USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The largest

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[13] I appreciate that for some this term may be problematic and perhaps accusations of paternalistic colonialism may have a degree of merit. However, I draw my definition from Woodward (2002) who defines Western as nations pertaining to a broad group of native first language English speaking nations which are connected through an Anglo-Saxon heritage. I am not denying the existence of the multicultural society nor am I ignorant of the significant historical, cultural and political influence which Britain has had on Commonwealth nations and overseas territories; I am simply drawing attention to the fact that nationality, culture and identity have a complex multifaceted fluid relationship. For reasons of facilititation, I have used the term Western but this divide is not solely based upon an East-West divide but also includes Southern hemisphere nation states such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

proportion of nationalities outside the West included six Chinese nationals. I was interested on the impact that Western culture had had on the establishment and development of music tastes on a number of national identity and cultural identity issues. One of the aims of the study was to examine the music cultural practices of individuals who have come to the UK from outside the Anglo-Saxon axis. In particular, I wanted to examine the impact that Western music had on individuals who came from non-Western cultures such as Asian nation states, and in particular whether their music cultural practices had shifted since arriving in Lancaster.

Lancaster University has for many years, maintained close partnerships with a number of Chinese universities and Chinese government organizations. There are over 500 Chinese undergraduate and postgraduate students at the university and so this study provided an ideal opportunity to step outside the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon participant to explore how immersion into Western society and culture had shaped their music preferences. I aimed to determine if they listened to more or less Western music since they started their studied at Lancaster University. It was also possible that since they had moved to Lancaster University, they listened to less Western music and more music of their own culture as a tool to re-affirm their own national and cultural identity. Thus, it was also of interest to determine if they had indeed increased the number of listening hours of their own music and whether these practices took place as part of a social community which is often considered so important to affirm music identity (Arnett, 1995), or alone, in private.

I aimed to determine which Western music genres featured strongly on their music palate. Prior to the interviews, I was under the impression that from reports in the UK media, that there were a number of restrictions on social media websites and search engines in China and access to music websites with Western music would be difficult or banned for Chinese individuals. It became quickly apparent that my impressions of the limitations to access all types of media in China were simply wrong. All the Chinese participants confirmed the previous accounts of their fellow Chinese nationals, that access to all types of

Western music and music videos is largely unhindered. It would appear that the only prohibited songs are ones which contain strong swear words or sexually explicit videos otherwise they were free to download a wide range of music and videos without fear of arrest. This was a surprise to me and while it is accepted that six participants is not enough to develop a generalized picture of media access in China, an exploration on the interaction between different cultural identities on the trajectory of music preferences may be considered for future research.

Only Sherry (23) listened to more Chinese music and less Western music since arriving in the UK. She stated that she missed her parents and listening to Chinese music was another way of connecting with them. However she had only been in the UK for 8 weeks at the time of the interview, so it is probably too early to determine if this is a transient phase or the establishment of more permanent cultural habit. All the other Chinese nationals had changed their cultural practices to listen to more Western music. Interestingly Artemis (F: 21) already had an established taste in Western music. She had never liked Chinese popular music, and in her early teenage years she liked mainstream Western pop music. However this preference had waned and prior to coming to the UK her main music preferences were for1950s rock 'n' roll, 1990s alternative-indie rock (Green Day) and 1970's alternative rock (Velvet Underground and Pink Floyd). However she stated that her preferences were changing again. The two styles of alternative rock had remained stable as high preference, but recently she had begun to explore classical music. There was no specific obvious reason for the development of her new preference, but she thought part of the reason behind the shift may be due to exposure to the weekly concerts held at the university. At home in China, opportunities to access live performances of classical music were markedly less than here at the university. Yet it is also true that her preference for alternative rock was among the Chinese students the exception rather than the rule. Most of the other Chinese nationals who listened to more Western music largely listened to mainstream pop music. Bella (23) noted that she had significantly increased her hours of engagement with Western music from 1-2 hours per day in China to

approximately 10-12 hours a day. The main reason for this marked change in listening hours was not solely because of the availability of music but also the music provided her company. Individuals' accounts from other nations largely supported the finding that since they arrived in the UK, they had listened to more Western music than the music from their own cultural background. Nik (M: 18, Russia) had an established taste in death metal music prior to coming to the UK. Since his arrival his taste has opened up to include jazz, classical music and dubstep music. Further exploration of the reasons behind his broad palate revealed a strong desire to assimilate into British culture and society. He was undergoing a period of rejection of his Russian national identity and he admitted that he avoided fellow Russian students and Russian communities. It is also possible that one of the reasons behind Nik's transition in taste is due to high levels of Exploration. This shift identity may have been triggered or enhanced by his move away from his homeland and to be re-classified as a foreign national (Erikson, 1968). No other overseas students commented that they had shifted their sense of national identity, but it appeared that immersion in UK culture had had a significant impact on their taste palate to accommodate more music from the UK / USA. Thus it would appear that travel and exposure or immersion in another culture may have a significant impact on the trajectory of music preferences.

7.4 Music as object of the self

Physical format
To support my position that music is a symbolic object of the self, then this raises one important question, what form does music take to be considered an object? This question is not necessarily as straightforward as it may seem. Conceptions of the object differed between the physical object and digital format, yet it was also apparent that for some the music was the memories and experiences attached to the music. It is maintained here that the even if the music is a memory it is still an object of the self, positioned as an extension of the self, of past identities (Ahuvia, 2005; Belk, 1988, Dittmar, 1992, Csikszentmihalyi-Rochberg-Halton, 1981, Cohen, 1989). For some, the tangible, physical format of the music was an important element of their identity and loss of the object brought about intense

emotions for the object was considered irreplaceable. For example, when Florence (34) was in her twenties she went through a very difficult period, caught in an abusive relationship and succumbing to significant mental health issues. Unfortunately, following a traumatic event she had to flee her house without many of her possessions, leaving behind her treasured vinyl collection. [14] Some of her vinyl had been given to her by her late father and thus these records held significant sentimental value. The pain of losing those records is still a painful memory. For Florence the loss of these cherished, objects extends beyond the loss of the music itself and indeed the loss of the pure functional purpose of the music itself. These objects signify a physical link between her memories of her late father to her own personal identity. Such objects cannot be replaced.

Florence (34): 'It still hurts my heart because some of it had come from my Dad and he had died. Things like the *Sticky Fingers* album (Rolling Stones, 1971) with the zip on it, it's sort of irreplaceable. Even if I did get another copy, it wouldn't be the one my Dad had given me'.

In essence, Florence's sense of loss for these objects is bereavement for an irreplaceable part of her identity (Belk, 1988; Cohen, 1989; Kroger & Adair, 2008; Tian & Belk, 2005). Although the physical object can be replaced, the meaning of the object as a 'prosthetic extension of the self' embedded within deep personal memories is lost.

For others the physical format of the music was extremely important because it fulfilled a hierarchical relationship between the style of music and the music. Many expressed that high level music preferences could only be played on vinyl, cassettes and CDs were generally considered lower than vinyl in status but higher than downloads. Indeed it would appear that for some participants, the act of engagement was just as important as the act of listening to the music. This act of engagement could mean physically holding the object and examining the lyrics on the inner sleeve (Grace, 28) or putting the needle on the

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[14] I made a point not to ask Florence to elaborate, as I felt any further questions may break ethical guidelines. I am not a trained counsellor or psychotherapist and I was concerned that I may compromise my role as researcher. She was clearly visibly upset, becoming quite tearful and thus I saw little need to delve into detail.

record and hearing the music which now belonged to them in physical format rather than just on the radio (Hilary, 58). The sense of ownership, in particular the physical ownership was crucial to the sense of enjoyment. Hilary recounted the overwhelming sense of excitement that she and her sister experienced on Saturday mornings because that was the day that their parents gave them pocket money to buy a record. She noted that her parents had little spare money so the pocket money went to either her or her sister on alternate weekends. She still treasures her vinyl collection but is also open to using the internet to search back catalogues. Her openness to include download was unusual when compared to other vinyl fans. Justine's (36) opinion on the status of vinyl is typical, 'I mean Led Zepplin I would only have on vinyl […] it just seems wrong to have such a classic on any other media'. The positioning of vinyl as high status was not confined to older participants as expected. Megan (20, Polish) believed that 'vinyl has a unique sound'. Sarah (19) supported the high status of vinyl over downloads and unlike many of her friends, simply refused to downloaded music. If she liked a piece of music she bought the CD, but vinyl was clearly superior to other formats of music. She even joked about the cultural and financial worth of vinyl, 'I know my parents have got loads of vinyl in the attic upstairs and I can't wait to inherit it (laughs)'.

Bertram (23) liked the 'fuller sound you get with vinyl', a view which was supported by many who liked the crackles and hiss with vinyl. However Andrew (66) who owns over one thousand vinyl records dismissed such notions as misplaced romanticism. He noted that 'the warmth that everyone talks about is in fact distortion'. It was interesting to note that some bought second hand vinyl and enjoyed the sense of shared ownership and experiences. Grace (28) highlighted the importance that this sense of shared ownership holds for her. For her the object connected her to another person whom she would never know but she believed that they shared common experiences with the music which extended beyond a shared liking for the music and shared values associated with the music (Arnett, 1995, Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; Greasley *et al*, 2013; Krause & Hargreaves, 2013). Her account also underlines the

importance of the act of engagement with music and the apparent superior level of experience of vinyl over other formatted music.

Grace (28): The actual act of putting a record on, getting up, turning it over is much better than pressing a button for downloads, there's definite life to it as well. And also because a lot of those records are second-hand, you can sometimes get funny little doodles or names on the middle of the sleeve or little doodles on the sleeve notes and that's nice. You think that this has been owned by somebody else and this has had somebody else's life you know, and this *was* part of somebody else's life and now it's part of mine'.

The recognition that somebody else may have also experienced the same emotions and reactions to the object was an important aspect of her engagement with the music. Yet I was also intrigued to note that she recognized the power that music may have over one's identity. Her comment that 'this has had somebody else's life' was very interesting. It would suggest that not only music is indeed a powerful symbolic representation of identity, but also her comment recognizes the immense power that music can have over all aspects of human living, emotions, dreams, memories, and a fundamental part of daily living. Yet it was clear in other interviews that the power of the music can also be used as a weapon to intimidate and humiliate others, especially by the in-group dominant social groups (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Hargreaves, North & O'Neill, 2000 Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Object of past identities
As identified by Grace and Florence, many researchers have identified the strong association between music and one's past including previous relationships (Cook, 1998; DeNora, 2000; Giles *et al*, 2009; Kroger & Adair, 2008; Shankar *et al*, 2000. I will address this issue on two distinct themes which arose out of the thematic analysis. The first theme concerns a past 'outsider' identity through 'being different' as a result of mental or physical disabilities. Throughout her life Grace (28) has faced a number of

challenges, some which are long-term, inherent, biological challenges but others lifespan events which arose in early adolescence had a profound effect about how she used music to deal with these challenges. The second issue which I will explore is how music preferences evolved as a result of a significant disequilibrating event (Breakwell, 1988; Erikson, 1968), the break-up of the family unit. Rather than explore the association between the meaning of music as a symbolic representation of past personal relationships which has been covered before by previous researchers (e.g. DeNora, 2000; Shankar, 2000; Shankar *et al*, 2009), I wanted explore the relationship between music and past identities from slightly different angle. In most cases of personal relationship break-up, the individuals concerned may or may not remain on good terms but the relationship, the union is considerably altered. It is also likely that the meaning and function of any shared music will have shifted or even rejected for both parties. However the example I've drawn from is the relationship between Megan (20, Poland) and her father, a relationship which is still as strong as it has always been. Her account not only confirms the how significant disequilibrating events can impact the trajectory of music preferences, but it also highlights the importance that music plays to help adolescents deal with significant emotional turmoil (Arnett, 1995, Juslin & Sloboda,2001; Lundqvist *et al*, 2009; North, Hargreaves & Hargreaves, 2004; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Shankar, 2000; Zillman & Gan, 1997). Several participants noted that they were unable to listen to certain tracks or albums because of lost personal relationships or traumatic events. For example, Tee (M: 24) found that he finds it difficult to listen to one particular Kings of Leon album (*Only By The Night*, 2008) because of it brings back painful memories of his past relationship. Sarah (19) in a similar way to Grace refuses to listen to any of her past emo music which previously she had rated highly. She and her ex-boyfriend liked the EMO bands. Their high preference for this genre was also signified and enhances by their choice of clothes and appearance, which were stylistically strongly associated with the emo culture, black hoodies, lots of bangles and make –up for both she and her boyfriend. However, to listen to this music is to revisit her past EMO identity, which for her invokes embarrassment and shame. She admitted that the only real reason she joined the group was because this group openly accepted

'outsiders'. Sarah saw herself as an outsider because she was of large build and didn't conform to the accepted or ideal body shape in the media. Her body shape has not changed but now she no longer sees herself as an outsider, she likes who she is, but the EMO music is representative of her sense of shame and ridicule by the 'pretty' girls.

Megan's account was striking because she although she did not reject jazz, it remained a special part of her identity with her father, for a period of time she refused to engage with it. Although jazz has since returned to her music palate as high status, the meaning of the music and her orientation towards the music is tempered by feelings of foreboding and fear of emotional outbursts.

However I will first explore Grace's account which provides some insight into the impact that being 'an outsider' can have on the trajectory of music preferences and the challenges that this can have on one's self-view, which may have particular resonance in adolescence . Grace was born with cerebral palsy. Between the ages of 11and 14, several prolonged periods of surgery and hospitalisation were required. Not long prior to the first bout of surgery, she had recently moved to the North West of England from the North East because her parents believed that the hospital, rehabilitation and physiotherapy facilities were of a higher standard in the North West. However, she clearly saw herself as having three 'outsider' identities. She was someone who was visibly disabled requiring sticks to aid walking; she had moved from another part of the country enhanced by her accent and trying to form new friendship groups; and she had different music tastes to the other girls. In addition, she was coming to terms with her own sexual feminine identity through heavy metal rock music, rather than the 'usual girl- boy band' relationship. She totally rejected the boy band mainstream music in favour of her father's 1970s and 1980s rock and heavy metal music, music which continues today to hold for her a significantly high level of preference. Yet understandably, back in her early teens, she saw herself as an outsider:

Grace: Did my fashion sense reflect the kind of music I listened to? Yeah. I think it still does but in a less obvious way […] talking to you it sounds a bit cliché to say that but it is band on my T-shirts and [I'm] still like that now DM (Dr. Marten) boots, even now. To a degree, I was always on the edge as a visibly disabled person, I was already occupying that, and I was from a different part of the country and I was on the edge as a new girl. Then, I went away for a long period of time and there I was quite visible. You already feel awkward enough as a teenager don't you and there I was wearing all these splints. Yeah really visible, the whole walking sticks and you know, that made music mean more to me as I got more into it, collected more of it and it became a big part of my life.

At this section we discussed how her music preferences had developed and evolved from childhood exposure to music and through her early adolescent period in the context of multiple periods of hospitalisation. In her early adolescence, she used to use music to deal with her emotions, predominantly anger but even now as an adult she finds it refuses to engage with her earlier taste:

R: With your Walkman, did you have any music with you when you were in hospital?

Grace: I remember listening to Alanis Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill* (1995), because somebody had recorded that for me and brought that in […] and they (her friends) brought me in Meredith Brooks. She sings that song about being a bitch, and that, that album (*Blurring the Edges*, 1997) and that is the kind of song (*Bitch*, 1997), that kind of reminds me of being thirteen or fourteen.

R: Being devil's advocate here, thinking of Alanis Morissette and Meredith Brooks, do you think there is a strong sense of anger going on here?

Grace: (Laughs) Yeah, like Alanis Morissette? Yeah yeah.

R: Was the anger part of you building up, being stuck in hospital not being able to do whatever?

Grace: Yep. I think it's quite a complex relationship [...] I think now I wouldn't get Meredith Brooks out now.

R: What would happen if you heard it?

Grace: If I heard it on the radio, I'd turn it off.

It is evident that her orientation to her past music tastes has shifted. Where once she found solace and 'understanding' in her music identity, now the music is representative of a past identity which represents uncomfortable memories of boredom and frustration. The music was symbolic of her identity as an outsider and while she acknowledges her past, she has no desire to re-visit this past identity through music. It is interesting to note that her isolation from friends and social groups also impacted on her music taste and knowledge about music, and in turn reinforcing her self-view as an outsider. She remembered that when all her friends were talking about the Britpop and the Blur versus Oasis discussions, she was largely disinterested, 'That [Britpop] really passed me by entirely. It just leaves me cold'.

Her high level of preference for heavy metal and rock music had created distance between herself and the dominant group of girls, no-one else shared her love of this music. As an adult, she no longer sees her rock / heavy metal music as a symbolic representation of her identity as an outsider. It is also of interest to observe how non-exposure in adolescence has a significant impact on her preferences. It was noted in the introduction chapter that apart from listening to music, adolescents also rate talking about and reading about music higher than any other activity (Fitzgerald *et al*, 1985; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2006, 2007). Bess (24) spent eighteen months away from school due to illness. She too recounted that her preferences remained the same and when her friends were talking about the new bands, she felt emotionally isolated as well as physically. These accounts would appear to suggest that reading and talking is important but for an individual to actively participate the right social contexts is just as

important. At present, Grace's preferences are now a positive symbolic representation of her identity as a partner, a wife, for her husband also shares her love of rock and heavy metal music, particular a band called Nine Inch Nails. This band holds special symbolism in their identity as husband and wife.

7.5 Re-orientation of the object due to lifespan experiences

Megan's (20, Poland) account reveals how the major disequilibrating event of family break-up led to a significant shift in her self-view of her identity. As a consequence of this shift in identity saliency, her music taste palate altered accordingly and although she has since re-engaged with jazz and the level of preference has remained high, it no longer fulfills the same function and the level of engagement has diminished. In adolescence, jazz was used to enhance feelings of warmth and happiness symbolic of a shared musical identity with her father and symbolic of her as a daughter; but now its function is primarily is to fulfill a need for nostalgia, to remember happier, lost times.

Between 12 and 13 years of age, Megan found it extremely difficult to cope with the break-up of her parents' marriage. Her father, with whom she always had a very strong relationship, left the family home which unsurprisingly was a significant source of emotional upset. Megan's self-view of her old identity had been the eldest child within the strong comforting reliable framework of a stable family, only to be replaced by a new unfamiliar identity, filled with uncertainty, tension and anxiety. This new altered self-definition of her identity had direct consequences on her mental health and her music preference palate.

Jazz had formed a significant position in her music preference palate, a strong symbolic representation of her identity because it held strong positive happy associations of her relationship with her father. One of the primary reasons why jazz was important and a significant representation of her identity was that within the family unit, only she and her father liked jazz music. For Megan, long car drives were an important aspect of their shared engagement with jazz. However both during and shortly after the family breakdown, her identity was inherently and indelibly defined by intense negative emotions of anger, uncertainty, tension, rage and frustration. She was no longer the eldest child of a stable family unit. This

unit was re-defining itself through tension and anxiety and in turn this had a significant impact on her sense of identity. Although jazz music remained an inherent symbolic representation of her identity, its position on her preference palate was markedly compromised on two significant levels, the level of engagement and the level of congruency or saliency in relation to her identity. Although she did not reject jazz outright, she made a definite decision to explore new music tastes that were salient symbolic representations of her identity; it was to heavier aggressive music that she turned, music such as alternative metal, industrial metal (also known as Goth metal) and UK 1970s punk music, in particular the music of the Sex Pistols. To a large extent the aggressive guitar chords and vocal delivery, fast tempo and heavy bass became a cathartic experience to help her deal with the extreme emotions.

Megan: It was a very angry period for me. It was when I was making choices regarding alternative and industrial metal […] it was when I was literally identifying with a lot of tunes, because I was angry all the time, pretty much for quite a while.

R: So you used music as a vent to get the anger out?

Megan: Yes I was keeping the emotions inside and with the music I was able to take them out and it was a bit of a catharsis for me and basically I was dealing with everything with the music. I was always listening to rock and harder music, (Sex Pistols, Marilyn Manson, and Nine Inch Nails) […] my therapist (after a period of depression) advised me to get it out.

She has since re-discovered her love of jazz but it no longer holds the same happy meaning but the meaning has occasionally become tainted with a sense of foreboding of dark feelings. Her orientation towards the music has shifted and even though she still likes jazz she is cautious about its meaning. At the moment she is unable to cleanse the pain and hurt from this upsetting period of her life out of jazz. Megan stated that her liking for jazz is still strong but she is aware that it may trigger some strong emotions or uncomfortable memories and as such she listens to jazz less often than before the family

break-up. Despite the strong emotions and painful memories that jazz make evoke, she still listens to it mainly for nostalgia to remember the happier times with her father. From a symbolic interactionist, Megan's account demonstrates how the meaning of music has evolved due to significant disequilibrating events. The meaning of the music is no longer about shared happy memories with her father in the car, but for the moment, it is indelibly tainted with dark emotions which lie just beyond the surface even though she still holds the music as high status.

Megan and Grace's accounts are supported by other accounts which demonstrate rejection of earlier tastes. Davenz (M, 25) admitted that hearing his teenage preferences brings about feelings of shame and embarrassment. Will (31) identified that memories of his earlier preferences and music behaviour, such as dancing and talking about the music as an expert in his field, now bring about a small sense of self-loathing and shame, 'God I was knob'. Emma (26) has rejected her earlier indie US punk tastes because 'I didn't want to be reminded of that angst'. Webster (M,44) and Tee (M,24) have largely rejected their earlier adolescent taste which informed their political values, political agency and lifestyle choices (Crozier, 1997; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; North & Hargreaves, 1999; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002; Zillman & Gan, 1997). Webster became involved in left-wing issues of the 1980s which will be explored later on. Tee became a vegan and was active in the anti-abortion movement. He adheres to neither now. The accounts of these individuals suggest reflect a sense of identity development of shifting values of how they same themselves in response to natural maturation and lifespan challenges (Erikson, 1968; Mead, 1934).

Re-orientation of music due to a shift within a specific part of identity was evident in older participants as well, thus giving credence to Erikson's notion of identity development occurring across the lifespan and not confined to adolescence alone. I have selected two accounts which I believe highlight how the relationship between music and identity is renegotiated and repositioned in light of identity development. The first account-Taghreed (F: 37, Saudi)- demonstrates how her early music preferences

were shaped by significant cultural, socio-historical and political events; but following the political unrest and the Arab Spring uprising, she has re-assessed her own religious identity, and her spiritual values. The music of her late mother has taken on new meaning as Taghreed due to a significant period re-assessment of her religious and spiritual identity. Yet it is also evident that she is going through a significant period of identity re-examination, re-exploring and re-evaluating her current commitments. Webster's (M: 44) music preferences were also enhanced by political events. However in contrast to Taghreed, having gone through a re-examination of his values, he appears committed to his current sense of identity.

When the first influx of US troops arrived in Riyadh in preparation for the first Gulf War in 1991, Taghreed's was sixteen. They brought CDs and cassettes of Western music and had their own radio station which she and her peers listened to avidly. In particular, she was drawn to the bands The Back Street Boys and The Black Eyed Peas. She was not alone to reject the formal traditional Arabic music. In contrast to the microtones of the religious prayer based Qu'ud music, the tonal based Western music seemed appealing, different, exciting. Western music and associated values were a welcome challenge to the conservative Arabic society and values, because not only could she now listen to solo female singers, supported by male musicians, a balance which was unheard of in conservative Saudi society; but they sang about love, sex, desire, passion. Themes such as these were considered to be highly improper by the state and religious police. Prior to the troops' arrival, she describes a very conservative society with most Saudis fearful of the religious police who forbade all forms of music beyond the accepted Qu'ud music. She noted that prior to the arrival of the US troops, the religious police were not beyond chastising anyone caught listening to Western music. Punishment usually meant a severe beating with large sticks. However the arrival of the US troops caused a significant shift in social and cultural practices as they brought a wide range of music styles and genres previously unavailable in Saudi Arabia. Although there was a degree of tolerance from the religious police she was reminded of the constant

threat of violence and retribution. She remembered one policeman had menacingly commented that the '[Western music] will take you to hell and you will be tortured if you listen to [that] music.' She later described the significant social political and cultural shift caused by the arrival of the troops:

Taghreed: It wasn't just me it was the whole society [that] had changed after the first Gulf War. Not only me, satellites came in, you are sitting in your living room, you only used to have two (television) channels, which is [sic] the government channels and now you have the whole world in front of you […] a big shift happened I must say.

Her high level preferences for US and UK music had remained relatively stable all throughout her twenties and early thirties, until the Arab spring uprising which began in Tunisia in 2010 and spread to a number of other countries including Libya and Syria. She nursed her mother through a long illness until her death sixteen years ago. Her mother loved to listen to Arab instrumental music, which is spiritual music dedicated for the Qu'ud. This music which until recently had just been associated with memories of her mother has now taken new significance because Taghreed feels that as a result of the violence, she has lost her religious identity. For a Muslim woman, this is a highly significant step. It is not an understatement to say that her life is in grave danger should her questioning of her religious identity were known to the more fundamental sections of Islamic society. Even though she has not rejected Islam outright, just to question the existence of Allah is enough. Fundamental Islamists believe that to question or reject the prophet Mohammed is a heinous, blasphemous act, a religious crime which is only punishable by death; under Sharia law her death would be justified.

Taghreed feels that she has lost her religious identity because she feels that He [Allah] is allowing the multiple deaths of vulnerable women and children. Her anger is mainly directed at those who use

religion as justification for war, but she is still angry with Allah. 'Why isn't He doing something about it?'[15] She described her problem as follows:

It is a difficult subject as a Saudi to talk about, which is my religious views. Because I still believe in God and the prophet Mohammed but I don't believe in religions. So I am a believer but the way religions are stated are mainly human interpretations [...] and that's made me adopt a more humanistic approach to life; and that's why I am into spiritual music and more or less country because it talks about the life, things that happen [...] pragmatic and more humanitarian, thinking about the human side of things.

R: Do you still consider yourself a Muslim or are you a questioning spiritual person without a definitive religion?

T: Like a code by an Arab philosopher who says, 'When I'm with believers I'm an atheist and when I'm with atheists I'm a believer (laughs).

Her account underlines how the meaning of the music has evolved in response to a shift in self-views of her identity due to social and political events. Yet it was evident that her high level exploration of her spirituality was not confined to her religious identity alone. Her music taste palate was also undergoing a re-examination and she was actively seeking out new music styles to reflect her new spiritual identity. Her current taste palate is clearly quite varied and includes country-Shania Twain, her mother's instrumental spiritual Qu'ud music and Ray Charles, rock music and Michael Kiwanake (British soul and folk singer song writer of Ugandan heritage). However for Taghreed the important aspect of the music is not the musical attributes but the message within the lyrical or meaning of the song which fits her spiritual framework.

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[15] Taghreed's anger at religious leaders echoes that of Mead's frustration and disappointment with organized religion. He too was highly critical of religious leaders who used biblical texts to incite national jingoism as justification for war.

The message and meaning of the song was also very important for Webster (44). The music had to have a strong political message. It has been established in the literature that adolescents use music to learn about their own personal and social values (Crozier, 1997; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; North & Hargreaves, 1999; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002; Zillman & Gan, 1997). In his adolescence and young adulthood, his political identity was how he wanted to be seen by others and the music culture of the mid 1980s enhanced and reinforced his political identity. Yet his account denotes how his political affiliation and identity has remained static but identity maturation has led to a marked reduction in the level of importance that music plays to affirm his political identity.

In the mid 1980s, many artists were vehement in their support to espouse left wing or at least anti-Thatcher political views, whether they truly adhered to this ideology or it became a convenient and perhaps cynical marketing tool to garner support for financial gain is unknown. Webster recounted how he was extremely proud to be seen as a left wing political activist taking positive action against the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990). Polemic arguments abounded on either side. For those on the left of British politics, she had become a popular figure of hate; for those on the right the country was still fully active in the Cold war and the left were seen as fanatical socialists who were willing to roll over meekly in the name ideology to give power to the USSR (now the Russian Federation). According to Webster there were many reasons to hate her and her Conservative government. Among these was her refusal to sanction the apartheid regime in South Africa; the miners' strike of 1984 led by the NUM president, Arthur Scargill (a counter-foil figure of hate for the right); privatization of the national industries; the rise of the nouveau-riche city broker in the City of London who could acquire immense wealth; and the deployment of nuclear missiles at Greenham common in Berkshire. A camp made up mainly of women had been set up in protest at the deployment of missiles. To a large extent the right wing press loathed the protesters for the use of direct action and violence against the police, with particular vitriol reserved for their feminist ideology seen as unorthodox and anti-establishment values.

It was not uncommon to see television images of women either trying to cut holes in the fence or scale it to enter the airbase. As will become evident Webster attended a few protests to declare his unity with their values and political identity.

R: Did you get your political values through the music?

W: I first got into Billy Bragg before the Smiths and that was quite a revelation that someone was doing that type of thing […] That happened when I was sixteen and then the Smiths happened and then I was old enough to articulate some of the thoughts vegetarianism, anti-Thatcherism, antagonism towards the British government, her [Thatcher] refusal to apply sanctions against South Africa and its apartheid regime […] Yeah there was a lot of coalescence in these things and it was quite an exciting time to find that your values were represented in the music. So I went towards the music that would show these values.[16] […] I went to a few [protests] in the North East. It was after the miners' strike, but there were still a few things [benefit gigs] going on related to the miners and the Greenham common women. I can remember I went to a couple of pivotal marches in London […] and there were people cutting down the fences of the RAF base supposedly [reported] to house Trident missiles or cruise missiles but I was too chicken to get involve in that kind of thing.

Like Taghreed the meaning and message within the music was more important than the musical attributes. However following a retrospective discussion comparing the political identity of his past to his current political identity, it was evident that he remains politically active but his memories of the union between his past music, values and political identities are a source of slight embarrassment.

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[16] In the mid 1980s, a collection of left-wing artists such as Paul Weller and Billy Bragg, Madness and the Housemartins formed a left-wing collection of socialist orientated musicians called Red Wedge. They performed a series of concerts aided by several popular chart acts to harness support from young adults to join the Labour party and core socialist causes. These included the support of miners following the failed 1984 miners' strike and to fight the incumbent Conservative government. However, following the landslide Conservative victory in the 1987 election, media interest in the group waned, supporting bands left before it was finally disbanded in 1990, arguably never really achieving the social impact that it aspired to.

W: People of my generation… (pause) I went to London and talked to an old friend and he became vegetarian pretty much through liking the Smiths. We were laughing about that, there was a whole generation of blokes who became vegetarian just because of Morrissey. And is he a role model? No. A bit embarrassing really (laughs).

The function of the music from that period has clearly shifted from one of affirmation of political identity, to one of nostalgia tinged with embarrassment. However, although the importance of the music to his identity has decreased, the level of engagement has been significantly reduced. He commented that, 'When I do get the music out, I'm proud of my tastes but it's bullshit, it really is'. Even though the music may have retained the message, that message and the meaning of the music is no longer salient to his identity which has led to a re-orientation of his music preferences established in adolescence. Webster's comments support my notion that following identity development and maturation, the function and orientation of the music shifts. It is still an inherent, indelible aspect of one's identity but preferences are subject to evolution of meaning which is also supported by Mead's pragmatic beliefs. He maintained that meaning of any object including the self evolves through different experiences and social interaction. So whereas the music of the 1980's at that time had significant saliency and meaning of shared political identity, today the meaning of the music has been re-interpreted and repositioned as part of his part identity.

7.6 Preference Shift
The thematic analysis revealed several different causes of why preferences shift across the lifespan. From a neo-Meadian symbolic interactionist /theory of evolution viewpoint it was very interesting to gather evidence of the ways in which individuals were proactive for means of self-preservation and self-esteem. According to Mead, individuals rely on previous experiences and internal conversations with the other to adapt to the challenges of daily existence. In relation to music preferences, this was manifested several ways. These may mean taking action or ensuring that they are seen taking action to ingratiate with a

dominant in-group; or exploring new music styles. Several noted that due to exposure from a new partner changed their orientation and preference level towards a particular music style. For example Angela (66) re-discovered her love of classical after meeting her husband at university, re-invigorating a preference which had lain dormant since her school days. Hilary (58) re-orientated her preference level for jazz after meeting her husband so that it shifted from low level ('I was an anti-Vietnam war hippy'), to high level. Similarly to Grace, her music is a symbolic representation of her partnership with her husband. Danni (F: 36) has shifted her own preference rating for 1980s electro-pop music from negative to high, since she met her new partner: 'I grew in to 80s music about five years ago, having rejected it for years, which my partner finds hilarious, I've given in to her'.

Peer pressure

Although I was familiar that there may be a degree of peer pressure to conform to dominant in-group behaviour, it was great surprise and sadness to hear of the level of bullying and intimidation which occurred over music. Leylim's (F: 18, Anglo-Turkish) account is typical.

Leylim: I remember being on the bus coming back from school and somebody looked at my i-pod and basically didn't really like my sense of music really […] I was leaning towards indie genre and yeah people at the time weren't very impressed with that so I decided to change my i-pod to include a bit more of this chavvy DJ stuff [urban DJ/club music].

R: So you felt pressured?

Leylim: 'Oh massively, I was thinking why don't I like this? I should like this and […] I pretended to like it. I faked it quite well […] but I liked it in that it made me feel a little bit cool […] it was just to feel included […] at least I could talk about it and make references about it and I could understand their references.

Before I comment on Leylim's account, I will introduce another account for comparison. Both highlight the dangers of holding out-group music preferences and both support Mead's notion of the proactive individual, but with different courses of action. Anne (Anglo-German, 18) attended one school in year 7 (aged 11-12) before moving house to a completely different area, school and ultimately found new friends. Her first year in secondary school was not an auspicious start. Anne described the first school as 'a bit rough, full of chavs'. Like Grace, she too had physical disabilities, because of flat feet she had to wear orthopaedic shoes. By the age of 11, she was already at least 6 inches taller than most of her classmates and was very conscious of her tall, gangly appearance. However similarly to Leylim, she was very keen to be accepted by the dominant group despite unwarranted ignorant, cruel jibes that related to her Anglo-German heritage, her height and physical disabilities. Anne's true personal music tastes consisted of UK/US 1980s rock (Queen and Bon Jovi) which had been drawn from her father's music tastes which she hid from the dominant group for fear of further bullying and emotional abuse. However, the desire to be accepted by the group was considered paramount and as a consequence she expressed overtly her preference for urban music which was socially constructed by the group as holding high prestige status, despite the fact that inwardly she hated the music.

Anne: I was quite gangly and I had big feet and had to have orthopaedic shoes because I had really flat feet and my arches had collapsed. I had glasses and […] I was half German and one of the girls in my class found out, told her brother from year 11 and he thought it was really funny to shout out, 'Hitler's grandchild' at me […] that's why I tried to like what they liked so I didn't stand out as much as I already did.

In order to be accepted, she made the decision to go shopping or rather be seen to go shopping with some members from the dominant group. She bought an urban music CD just so she could be seen buying the high prestige object, but as soon as she returned home, 'I just put it on the shelf and never listened to it ever, like in my life'. Fortunately after that rather uncomfortable first year at the school,

she moved house, school and developed new friends who were openly accepting of her non-mainstream music tastes and she in turn began to genuinely appreciate their mainstream/indie rock music tastes.

Although both Leylim (18) and Anne (18) were subjected to varying degrees of bullying in relation to the same style of music, Leylim's account is telling in that she shifted her preferences because of how it made her feel 'I liked it in that it made me feel a little bit cool'. In contrast, Anne maintained her own preferences because for her preferences were symbolic of her relationship with her father. Lara (22, Folk singer/songwriter) had a similar experience outsiders ridiculing her own music tastes and inadvertently challenging her identity with her father. She used to like dance electronic music with her social group of friends but her preferences shifted as the group could not accept her other tastes which she shared with her father.

R: Was there a fear of ridicule (from friends) if you said you liked Bob Dylan as well?

Lara: Well, they did start laughing at me for things like that. I was with a group of friends who used to come round to my house and take the mick out of my Dad or take the mick out of anyone who was listening to other music and this is why I stopped being friends with them. Music was a really big thing that stopped us being friends, because of their attitude towards it.

R: Did they see themselves as better than everyone else?

Lara: Oh yeah […] It was very much a group membership[…] Music for me is central, music has always been such a big thing for me as a singer songwriter so I don't know, it's just played such a massive role in my life.

When I explored her current preference rating and meaning for dance/electronica, even though she is no longer part of that social group, she still feels very angry. In a similar way to Megan, she cannot remove the intense emotions from the music her past identity is indelibly associated with the music.

Although Megan's preference for jazz has remained static despite variations in levels of engagement; Lara has re-orientated the music to a highly negative state and she believes that it will probably remain so for the foreseeable future. Just thinking and talking about her memories associated with the music brought about intense emotions:

Lara: I genuinely can't stand it now […] it genuinely makes me feel like, not angry but I feel like a bubble inside me. I do not want to listen, I do not want to be in this room, I do not want to listen to it.

Preference shift due to exposure
The evidence from individuals' accounts also supported the notion that exposure to new or unfamiliar music styles can lead to become established music preferences. It was surprising to note that a few individuals had developed strong level of preference for an artist or music style purely by a chance encounter. However, most identified that social encounters at university had had a significant impact on the trajectory of their music preferences. Marie (46) remembered that as a student at Birmingham University in the early 1980s, she developed a high preference for reggae music because of its prevalence in the pubs and clubs at that time, which she put down to the high popularity of the Birmingham based reggae band UB40. However, it would appear that her high level of preference was largely transient in nature, as reggae music no longer forms part of her palate. Further exploration of the reasons behind this apparent and quite sudden shift revealed that reggae music was symbolic of her university identity but since she moved away from that social group of friends, the music is no longer salient to her identity. Sharon (42) had a similar experience, expressing a firm preference for reggae music while a student at a Scottish university in the mid 1980s, but also dropped reggae from her preference palate on leaving university. Marie and Sam's experiences would suggest that for the development and maintenance of music preferences, social contexts are highly relevant, as was noted for both Grace (28)and Bess (24), (Hargreaves & North, 1997; Russell, 1997) .

A shift in music preference due to changing social relationships and contexts was also noted by Alex (F: 26). Examination of her music palate reveals that she has always had a broad selection of different music preferences. Her adolescent tastes included reggae, nu-metal and mainstream popular music and her current taste palate includes R&B and hip-hop (both rejected as a teenager), blues, ska, indie rock, reggae, electronica and jazz. However at university in her late teens, she regularly attended DJ House-techno trance clubs, but her engagement with this music since that period, has been markedly reduced. She explained that part of the reason behind her shift was mainly because she longer associates herself with that social context. She explained her reasons as, 'I think a lot of it is about shared experience. If you don't have anyone about you that has similar tastes, then you're not kept up with it'.

TJ (M: 30) on the hand has developed a strong preference for intense complex electronica music, since his university days despite an inauspicious start. During his first year at university he shared a corridor with a couple of fellow undergraduates who both shared the same taste in intense complex electronica music. At first he hated it, describing it as if he were being bludgeoned by the polyrhythmic, aggressive timbre of music. Yet his level of preference gradually began to shift to accept the music as salient to his identity with a shift in orientation towards the music. He admitted that by the time he had graduated, the music which he had been initially exposed to in the first year had now become benign and insipid. As a consequence he used the internet to seek even more complex electronica music, expanding on his friends' tastes to take ownership of the music. Now a university lecturer aged 30, married with a baby on the way (at time of interview), he admitted that his new responsibilities have understandably caused a marked shift in his self-view of his own identity, but complex electronica music is still salient to his identity. In fact he commented that his music is more important to him now than at any other time of his life. His music is an essential part of his identity; in effect it is his little degree of sanctuary or bubble where he can relax and work in peace. His early preferences of Britpop established before university are no longer salient to his current identity, with a definitive shift in function from social group definition

and affiliation to nostalgia. On the rare occasions that he engages with this music, it still brings a degree of enjoyment, his early tastes are always 'fixed in joyous nostalgia'.

Eureka moment

A few individuals commented that a chance event had had a significant impact on the trajectory of their music preferences. For example, Andy (36) identified his 'eureka moment' during a Jah Wobble gig while working in the arts, performance and management department at another university in Lancashire. He was asked to set up the hospitality for the upcoming gig and decided to stay to watch as he had nothing better to do. He described the intense feelings associated with the music as, 'that turned everything on its head for me'. Prior to the gig, he was unfamiliar with the music style of Jah Wobble (former bass guitar player with Public Image Limited) or his contribution to British music, but now he considers himself to be an aficionado of his music. However, Andy's sudden liking for Jah Wobble is perhaps not surprising. Exploration of his music tastes prior to the event revealed that he held (and still does) reggae and other forms of dub music in high esteem. The emphasis on the syncopated third beat of the bar and driving melodic base lines, musical attributes often associated with reggae music, feature heavily in Jah Wobble's music.

Ieuan (56) remembers a specific moment in his early thirties, which had a significant impact on the trajectory of his music preferences. His music preferences up until this point consisted of Krautrock (experimental complex electronica-rock), country, classical music (mainly the German stem) and early electronica. By chance, a friend brought a Monteverdi album which totally changed his preference palate. He thought that it was just simply beautiful, no chills or shivers (Grewe *et al*, 2007), just beautiful. Today his music palate is almost univorous with early music forming a significant part of his music palate. On the rare occasions he engages with Krautrock, like TJ and Webster, its main function is just for nostalgia.

Kathryn (19) discovered The Beatles purely by chance searching the internet and You Tube. She recalled an immediate feeling of pure joy and shivers hearing their music. She had been aware of their iconic status but that 'was for people of her parents and grandparents age'. Now she too considers herself to be an aficionado of their music. She has a large collection of Beatles album, some in multiple formats and at the time of the interview she was keen to show me her Beatles pencil case, Beatles design bag and several badges displaying The Beatles. These objects of high preference are clearly an inherent and important symbolic aspect of her identity. However, it was noteworthy that assimilation of music largely removed from socio-historical and cultural context was another emergent theme which featured strongly within the thematic analysis.

Exo-identities
Strongly associated with these Eureka moments was the often quite sudden adoption of an exo-identity. Although an adoption or reframing of parents' music preferences was to be expected; the adoption of music styles not related through parents' music preferences or styles distant from an individual's own social and historical context was surprising. These were coded as exo-identities. For example, Elizabeth (19) remembers being transfixed on hearing Japanese pop music for the first time. Her account is interesting in that it links the effect of exposure and the adoption of an exo-identity. A friend played her a track on her MP-3 player at school and she just felt instantly drawn towards this music. She considers herself to be an aficionado of Korean and Japanese pop music or K-Pop & J-Pop to give these styles their more colloquial reference names. She is a member of a K-Pop dance troupe and said that when she is with the troupe she feels Korean she has adopted the Korean identity. Despite her blond hair and blue eyes, during the rehearsal and performances she adopts her Korean identity, for that short period of time she is in effect Korean even though she has never been to either Korea or Japan. However Lucy's (18, Lithuania) exo-identity is entirely internal. She holds a strong affinity with culture and music late 1950s early 1960s and in particular she is drawn towards jazz, swing, blues and crooners of the period. Yet her exo-identity can only exist as a fantasy. Outwardly she appears to have an entirely normal appearance of

a modern young woman, but in her fantasy or exo-identity she exists, dressed in the fashion of that period. In contrast to Elizabeth who wears the appropriate clothing attached to the Korean and Japanese clothing and is an active member of an identifiable social group; Lucy acts out her identity within her personal sphere. To Lucy, the music of Doris Day, Frank Sinatra or Dave Brubeck evokes particular scenarios which are acted out in her dreams and fantasies. She described a particular common scenario which the music creates for her:

Lucy: It creates a beautiful image of for example like a pub or something, like that you know and you have all these beautiful girls, dressed nicely and usually a singer, just performing 'that' [the song]…I'm like completely out, like I can walk the street but I'm completely in the other world for example imagining myself like on a stage performing the song'.

Reframing the parental influence
It was also noteworthy that some participants had adopted or readopted their parents' music tastes after a period of rejection. The adoption and high level preference for music styles which existed outside of their own immediate historical and cultural contexts, but were directly associated to the individual through familial connection were coded as partial exo-identities. Many had adopted assimilated these partial exo-identities into their own identity; but had extended his or her knowledge base of the artists' oeuvre or even that they believed that they were bigger fans of the music than their parents had ever been.   However it of interest to note that this shift back to their parents' tastes was often triggered by a shift in their own self-views of their own identity. For example, Willow's (22) early music memories and preferences mirrored that of her father's own preference for folk, folk rock and rock (Eric Clapton, Jon Baez, Bob Dylan, Fairport Convention). In her mid-teens her preferences had shifted towards to a more aggressive and contemporary rock style, such as the music of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, even though the liking for her father's taste in music had not diminished all together the level of engagement had diminished considerably. However by the age of 15, she had rediscovered her taste for folk rock,

approximately at the same time as she began to develop her political identity and establish her own political values and beliefs. She revisited her earlier Bob Dylan records and CDs and felt that his pacifist and economic moral stance of anti-corporatism echoed and reinforced her own political identity and moral value system. As a consequence of this identity development and establishment of her own political beliefs and values, she disengaged with the with her earlier aggressive rock tastes to explore and expand her own tastes in folk rock music. She believes that she has adopted and extended the ownership and the political identity associated with Bob Dylan and the folk-folk rock movement beyond that of her father. Apart from the fact that her knowledge and collection of folk and folk rock album is larger than her father's; she believes that the current resurgent folk movement has reclaimed Dylan, an artist in early seventies as an icon of the 21st century away from tired, clichéd images of 1960s and 1970s of anti-Vietnam peace protests. In addition, she made changes to her consumer behaviour by refusing to visit or purchase goods from high street chain shops as she felt these shops contravened her political values. Lara's (22) account shared the same association between music and identity as Willow. She too held a strong relationship between her music and her political beliefs and values.

Lara: I play some of his (Bob Dylan) songs and I feel it, the things he was feeling when he wrote the songs, when he was very much around my age. So I really feel like they apply to me in my time of life; whereas to my parents, it's what did apply to them […] so this music is for me.

R: Is this your identity? Is it still saying 'this is who I am', even though he is old enough to be your grandfather?

Lara: Yep, but it is the same with Leonard Cohen and Joni Mitchell. What they sing are things that go through my head.

Yet it would appear that the reframing of parent's tastes is not necessarily a recent phenomenon. David (73) developed his own taste for classical music while a student at Cambridge in the 1950s. In his own

adolescent years he rejected the classical music loved by both his parents, but at university his preference palate shifted. He believes that he has built a wider interest in classical music than his father ever did. He too believes that he has taken ownership of his own tastes, 'I suppose that I knew that I was not going back to what my parents had liked, but I was certainly building on that'.

Although the reframing of parent's music taste in folk music was of interest, it was unclear whether this was due to the resurgence in folk music alone, or part of a wider pattern of exploration and recommitment of earlier tastes in early adulthood. Further analysis of the data revealed that the latter possibility appeared to hold true. Examination of older individuals' tastes revealed that for some individuals, certain music styles undergo fluctuations in levels of preference. To expand on this point, it would appear that some music preferences which may have become rejected may return to high status. Although there is no single discernible cause for these fluctuations, it would appear that individuals who enjoy exploring new types of music or are actively engaged to use the internet to challenge their own music boundaries are more likely to evoke old musical identities than those who are more committed to their taste palate. However lifespan events, identity maturation and saliency also seem to have a significant role in the shift.

7.7 Re-exploration of music preferences

Marie's (46) account is noteworthy for its demonstration of how she has engaged with her high and low level preferences in totally different ways. Over the last year, her music practices have undergone marked shift to revisit her old punk identity and revive her interest in 1970s UK punk music. She has always had a broad taste in music and currently enjoys listening to BBC Radio 6 to challenge her tastes and maintain her knowledge and high interest in music current. In her adolescence she held punk music in high esteem and enjoyed going to gigs. However this interest in punk music waned as the genre largely disappeared from British music culture. Although she went through a period of disengagement with music in general, which coincided with her commitments of raising a family, she re-invigorated her

love of music when her children went through adolescence to develop and establish their own taste in music. She noted that she loves BBC Radio 6 because it 'appeals to music lovers'. Yet this revival of her love of music triggered a re-examination of her earlier tastes. Revisiting her past music identity evoked a strong recommitment to punk music as high prestige status. Part of her evocation of her past identity has included re-engaging with her vinyl records after many years absence and even going to a gig by a punk-revival band. However it is also noteworthy to say that her renewed interest in music has led to an exploration of 1970s disco and classical music, styles which in adolescence were both held as negative status. Although she is exploring these styles, it is interesting to note that the ways in which she explores either style is very different from her re-examination of punk music. Whereas her punk music is actively explored through the internet and BBC Radio 6, both disco and classical music are mainly engaged with on mainstream channels, indicative of her low level of preference. She noted that although she is currently exploring classical music through Classic FM, she dislikes the informal 'lightweight, sickly sweet' delivery of the presenters. She commented that 'the sound like they are doing a Marks and Spencer advert, it's not normal conversation'. Together we explored alternative ways of expanding her tastes, but when I mentioned BBC Radio 3 she was not aware of its content or that a broad spectrum of music styles could be found. She commented that in middle age she feels less inhibited, more confident in who she is and in addition, there is no peer pressure to conform to the dominant majority or adhere to the socially constructed rules on appropriate likes and dislikes.

Marie not alone amongst the older participants aged over 30 years to use the internet or specialist radio stations to explore new or back catalogues of established tastes. TJ (30) and Andy (36) both enjoy the challenge of sampling totally unknown bands to see if the music fits with their taste palate. Andrew (66) enjoys the challenges of BBC Radio 6 because of the wide and varied output. On further examination of how they saw themselves all these individuals felt that they had wide eclectic tastes. From their accounts it would appear that they may exhibit high levels of Openness and Exploration. Age alone does

not appear to be a factor. It would appear that individuals undergo periods of exploration and commitment across the lifespan (Erikson 1950, 1968).

For example, the manner in which Andrew (66) has re-engaged and re-examined his with his music bears some resemblance to Marie. He too is an avid listener of music with over one thousand vinyl records, and continues to engage with his music apart from vinyl through BBC Radio 6 and BBC Radio 3. He has occasionally delved into Classic FM, but found the 'bleeding chunks routine' exasperating. Further discussion of Andrew's frustration with Classic FM, revealed that he became irritated at the majority of its input which is of single movements of a symphony or the most popular works from a composer's oeuvre. He too has returned to his established tastes from adolescence but for different reasons. Andrew's music tastes shifted as an undergraduate in the 1960s away from classical music towards experimental, modern jazz music, blues and R&B music. He noted that being at university had a marked effect on his listening habits due to exposure to unfamiliar or previously rejected music styles. Similarly to Marie, he too experienced a period of disengagement with music in his thirties, but he began to re-engage with classical music in his mid thirties and at a classical concert, he met his wife a viola player. Exploration of his current tastes revealed that rarely listen to the blues or R&B anymore.

This is not to suggest that all older individuals have to go through a period of preference flux or re-examination. However it is of note that the data from the interviews would suggest that those individuals who have always enjoyed listening to a broad range of music styles, the high level preferences established in adolescence are more likely to undergo review than lower level of preferred music. Examination of the preference trajectory of other individuals with narrower taste shows no evidence of shift. In effect, these individuals have established their tastes with little evidence to suggest that they may re-examine their music taste palate which may be indicative of high levels of Commitment and low levels of Exploration.

When I explored the reasons behind the rejection of established tastes in adults, a common theme emerged which was that the music was no longer salient to their current identity. Jane (47) is a classically trained cellist, pianist, flautist and singer. Up until her thirties, she was an active member of a choir, but her recollection of her trajectory points to a gradual disenchantment with classical music in general which culminated in her decision to stop singing altogether. For Jane, her identity as a singer and as a musician was 'no longer me anymore'. In fact she takes no part in any musical activities and will occasionally listen to classical music through Classic FM but does not feel the need to actively engage with the music anymore.

Will's (31) decision to stop listening to obscure dance music occurred very suddenly, an event he described as an epiphany. He remembers using obscure electronic dance and experimental rock music to reinforce his self-image and project this image to the wider social context that he was someone who was intellectual and interesting. The biphasic reciprocal use of music to affirm self-view of identity and the wider social community has of course been well documented (Frith, 1996; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; Hansen & Hansen, 1991; Krause & Hargreaves, 2013; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). However his high level of preferences and the use of music to create and reinforce his self-view came to an abrupt halt one evening.

Will: It had to be obscure. I even bought an album by the band 'Silver Mount Zion Orchestra Tra-la-la with Choir' (experimental rock band) just because I thought it was the most obscure name for the band in my life […] I was a postmodern snob. I would go to obscure dance, dance [to] weird music. I got into it when I was twenty five and then one night I was dancing and I thought, 'Oh my God, what am I doing?'

Will remembered feeling very self-conscious that he was dancing to music which had suddenly become inappropriate, though it should be noted that a sudden cessation of a music preference was unusual.

Most adults observed that when the music was no longer a salient aspect of who they were anymore, the transition was usually a gradual process. Like Will, Sharon (42) also believed that in her adolescence her music (high preference for the Cocteau twins) made her look interesting and complex. She admitted that she used to believe that by wearing a lot of black clothes and dying her hair black, these actions together would enhance her image of a troubled, complicated, misunderstood intellectual. On reflection, a memory she now finds amusing, 'I'd be in the darkness and think about suicide listening to the Cocteau Twins and now I'm listening to them doing the ironing, that's middle age for you (laughs)'. However she admitted that these suicidal thoughts were never serious, but it gave her something different to talk about to her friends. She believed that these suicidal thoughts and her preference for the Cocteau twins made her look cool. In effect the meaning of the music for many adults has shifted in light of identity maturation. For Will and Sharon, the music was a symbolic representation of their intellectuality and crucially being seen as intellectual and non-mainstream in their tastes. It is also evident that the function as well as the meaning of the music shifted through identity maturation and various lifespan events such as changing social relationships. However, there is one final issue which this thesis will address, the level of importance of music in adulthood. Schäfer and Sedlmeier (2009) noted that the level of importance decreases in adulthood. However the findings from this study directly challenge this assumption (cf. Bonneville-Roussy *et al*, 2013). Out of the twenty five individuals aged twenty five years or more, only one individual (Martin, 30, Croatia) commented that the level of importance of his music today was less important than in adolescence. However he also noted that he is re-examining his music preferences palate as his established tastes are no longer salient to his identity. In addition, he noted that up until fairly recently, the primary function of his music palate was to control his emotions and for mood management. Yet on reflection, he feels that this need is no longer salient which is why he is undertaking a period of reflection and exploration of his own identity and the relevance of his music preferences. He had rejected classical music and Croatian popular music as part of his music palate, but at the time of the interview he was exploring both styles through the use of the internet.

7.8 Technology

The number of older persons who used the internet to explore new tastes or download back catalogues established preferences was higher than expected. In addition there appeared to be a direct relationship between the level of importance of the music to identity saliency and the use of technology or other media to explore music preferences. For example both Andy (36) and Marie (46) had increased their use of the internet to explore and engage with their music of high importance, Jah Wobble/ reggae and UK 1970s punk respectively. Yet music which was considered less important to identity was explored via mainstream radio rather than the internet. This finding appears to suggest that listening habits and cultural practices also undergo a period of evolution and re-assessment. In addition it would suggest that there is a hierarchy in relation to these habits. Interestingly some observed that their music was just as important but they engaged with it less. The reasons behind this appear to be due to the many personal and social commitments which are a natural part of everyday adult life which, as noted by Harrison & Ryan (2009), vary widely from the time concerns of adolescence. For example in her younger years, Danni (36) used to listen to music up to twelve hours a day, especially at weekends, but time and the financial commitments and responsibilities of having a son and a daughter, a partner, attending university as a part time PhD student and working as a taxi driver means she is little time to herself to listen to her music. Yet it is obvious that for Danni, the reduction in hours of engagement does not equate to music being less important to her life. She described a recent episode listening to a Queen album with her Mum (high preference for both of them), which she had not played for many months:

Danni: I thought I haven't heard this in months and months, in fact I haven't listened to any of this music and I could (clicks her fingers three times) you know, I knew every word of every song and I can tell you the history of the songs but I haven't listened to it for six or seven months at all, any of it […] How can I have not listened to this?

Danni's account is not unusual. Many participants aged twenty five years or more noted that music was just as important as in adolescence but the reasons behind the engagement were often more complex. It is apparent that the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) plays an important role in the development of adolescent music preferences because social group affiliation and delineation are important salient aspects to adolescent identity development. The accounts from Leylim and Anne support this point. However beyond this period of adolescence, the complexities of daily life and the changing social relationships developed through employment, different friendship and activity groups appear to have a significant impact on the trajectory of music preferences.

7.9 Discussion

This study has challenged the widely received notion that music preferences crystallise from the age of twenty four (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989; Delsing *et al*, 2008). In fact it is evident from this study that the development of music preferences may occur at any point of the lifespan. For example, the eldest participant David (73) has begun developing an interest opera in recent years, which he saw as an extension of his own taste in classical music. In effect this study has supported one of the fundamental research questions of the thesis that although music preferences established in adolescence may remain stable as high status, there is no need to reject the notion that the trajectory of music preferences does not evolve to allow new music preferences across the lifespan. Although the link between the trajectory of music tastes was strongly influenced by parents' tastes, after all these are usually one's early music experiences; it was surprising that this relationship was mainly established between fathers and daughters. Some female participants developed their own tastes from their mothers but this was number was miniscule in comparison to the number of female participants who expanded their own tastes on the back of their father's music preferences. Most male participants remember their early preferences as being influenced by their peers and friendship groups. This finding was unexpected and future research may explore the factors behind this aberrancy.

Through a thorough examination of a neo-Meadian symbolic interactionist lens, this study has supported Mead's (1934) notion of the evolution of meaning of an object through social interaction and personal lifespan experiences. It is clear that for many participants the meaning of music as an object symbolic representation of the self has shifted in light of a number of psycho-social challenges. The accounts also appear to support two of Erikson's (1968) theories. Firstly, identity development occurs across the lifespan and is not just an issue pertinent to adolescence; and secondly that biological and social factors are just as important in shaping identity as psychological processes (Kroger, 2002). A number of researchers (Alarid & Vega, 2010; Côté and Levine, 1988, 2002; van Hoof 1999a, 1999b; Waterman, 1999) have raised concerns that Erikson's theories have, for too long concentrated on the psychological processes at the expense of biological and social factors. This study confirms their concerns for it is evident that for some individuals, Grace and Anne for example, their biological identity was just as salient, if not more so in shaping their own sense of identity as other psychological and social processes.

Yet even though it has been established that music preferences can occur at any point of the lifespan, this study has also thrown up some interesting new ideas on the relationship between the psychological processes of identity, the trajectory of music preferences and the use of technology to support and enhance one's sense of identity. It was identified that some individuals have begun a process of re-examining their own music preferences in light of identity saliency. This may relate to a re-examination of music preferences discarded long ago or a reorientation of music preferences from a negative status towards high status. For example many commented that they had changed their opinion on tastes rejected as an adolescent. This raises several interesting issues which are highly relevant for future research. Firstly this would appear to suggest that the relationship between music and psychological processes may not be as robust as has been assumed (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Zweigenhaft, 2008). Patterns of preference identified in previous research may be a reflection of transitionary tastes. Secondly, this finding not only supports Erikson's notion of identity development

across the lifespan but may also suggest that identity development in adulthood may go through periods

of examination and stability or cyclical patterns of Moratorium and Achievement (MAMA) as identified

by Stephen *et al*, (1992). However, it is fully acknowledged that identity was not measured for this

study and therefore future research may explore this issue in greater detail. The final important issue

raised by this finding is that it supports the neo-Meadian, pragmatic perspective of symbolic interactionist

that individuals are proactive in shaping their environment. As noted earlier, Mead (1934) believed that

the meaning of any object including the self or society was never static but according to his pragmatic

beliefs, the object was always subject to periods of re-examination and appraisal of the appropriateness of

its meaning to one's lifestyle choices. Naturally for some, this may man a recommitment of one's

narrow selection but the important issue here is that the meaning of the object is never fixed just

reaffirmed as salient to identity.

In addition to the evolution of the meaning of music as an object of the self, symbolic interactionism may

also explain the relationship between music and cognitive behaviour. Symbolic interactionism as a

humanist centred approach rejects the notion that humans act in response to supernatural forces without

human volition (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1992, 2005; Plummer, 1991). Thus for this study, symbolic

interactionism rejects the notion that music makes individuals respond without control. Action

associated with the meaning or function of the music is mediated by internal conversations with 'the

other'. For example, if the salient identity for an adolescent is to adopt a 'threatening manner' either to

intimidate the wider members of society, concerned about the 'violent hoodie culture' or to re-affirm

how they see themselves; he or she will rely on previous experiences carried out by themselves and

others to adopt mannerisms, wear particular clothing and use a particular language set congruent with

that identity. Their actions are socially constructed because through internal conversations with the

other the adolescent is aware of how his or her actions are perceived by others. In short, he or she acts

in a certain way because it is believed that their actions will be interpreted by others as intimidating.

However the important issue here is that music does not make someone violent, use a particular language set and so on. To suggest otherwise is to over-exaggerate the effects of music (Hesmondhalgh, 2008). It is thus argued here that not only is music a symbolic representation of salient identity but identity is also a function of music.

To extend this point using symbolic interactionist theory if an individual wants to select music to satiate a need to relax, they will choose music which fulfills this function. This action is performed through internal conversation with others (including the self as an object) to confirm that this is their 'relaxation music'. Their salient identity is a desire to be alone with their music supplemented by other objects of the self such as baths or candles. However, in pragmatic terms the various response of relaxation do not originate from the music itself but from the individual. In other words music and identity interact to mediate the behaviour, but action comes from within the individual. Music is not a drug that controls large scale human behaviour without human volition. To clarify my position, I am not referring to micro neurological processes or fleeting emotional responses such as euphoria, tears, shivers or chills to music (Grewe *et* al, 2007; Johnsen *et al*, 2009; Juslin *et al*, 2008; Lundqvist *et al*, 2009; Faith & Thayer, 2001), these issues lie outside of this thesis. Neither am I arguing that music has no physiological, psychological response; quite clearly it does. The important issue within symbolic interactionism is that action is always mediated by the human individual, their identity and their identity saliency. Agency cannot possibly occur without the conscious mind mediating the responses to music. To listen to urban music does not make me aggressive because these are actions are not part of my identity saliency. Personally, I dislike pan-pipe new age music as a tool for relaxation, if music were a drug then I would relax irrespective of my personal preferences, social contexts, a notion which is plainly not feasible. So it is argued that through maturation the emergent self develops through social interaction and as a consequence of these interactions and experiences, individuals' orientation and meaning towards their preferences established in adolescence will shift accordingly. The music which represented their acting

tough or rebellious identities no longer fulfills that saliency and may shift to a nostalgic identity or outright rejection from the music palate.

Symbolic interactionism fully recognizes the importance that music can play to induce emotions, control moods, enhance the narrative within films or books, but music is not a supernatural force which bypasses the human mind. This study revealed several episodes where individuals commented on how the music made them feel or act. This position is not questioned. For example Sharon noted that in her adolescence, she thought about suicide on listening to the Cocteau twins; Will used to take part in weird dancing to obscure electronic music; Webster's music affirmed his left wing political values but it did not make him go on marches or wave banners. All these individuals made these decisions of their own free will. In essence, music does not induce suicidal thoughts or make people dance in a strange fashion or commit acts of wanton violence. The use of music is to enhance their sense of identity their values and their self-beliefs, to project to the wider community that this is who they are now and to a degree who they once were.

Further examination and reflection of individuals' accounts revealed one important finding which was not expected and that is there appeared to be marked differences in type of listeners for their particular music preferences. The data would appear to suggest that the cultural snob is largely obsolete and the univore versus omnivore debate irrelevant as only individual was univorous. In effect most people are omnivores. Analysis and reflection of the data revealed a strong relationship between levels of expertise and knowledge about a particular music styles and the different uses of technology to explore or commit to one's music preferences. Yet the data from this study would suggest that the delineation of the expert versus the voracious consumer should be expanded. Thematic data analysis revealed that there were two types of 'expert' listener (Savage & Gayo, 2011) but also two types of non-expert mainstream listener. I coded these types of listener as the broad explorer aficionado versus the narrow taste aficionado and the broad mainstream 'whatever is on' listener versus the narrow 'I know what I like listener. As noted

earlier, the broad explorer aficionado has a wide taste in music styles beyond their area of expertise whereas the narrow taste aficionado does not. However, the use of technology to differentiate between the groups was largely unexpected. The broad explorer aficionado tended to use the internet using social and media websites to explore their tastes. In addition to the serious music radio stations such as BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 6 and Jazz FM, the broad explorer was not averse to delve into non-expert radio stations. In contrast the narrow taste aficionado tended to only listen to a narrow selection of expert radio stations which catered for his or her needs. This individual tended to avoid mainstream radio. This individual may of course be the cultural snob by another name however, it was not apparent that intellectual or economic capital had any bearing on their tastes (Bourdieu, 1984).

The mainstream listeners were differentiated by either engagement with radio stations or use of their own music. For example, the broad mainstream listener was largely open to a wide variety of tastes and this was reflected in their choice of mainstream popular music or local radio stations. In contrast, the narrow mainstream listener tended to stick to one station which catered for a broad non-expert audience. The radio stations Classic FM or Rock FM were common examples raised by the participants. However it is evident that individuals can fluctuate between aficionado and non-expert within different styles of music. For example, Marie could be considered to be an aficionado of UK 1970s punk music. She is an avid BBC Radio 6 listener and she will occasionally listen to Radio 2 at work. She engages with her punk music largely through the radio or through the internet downloading back catalogues of old punk records. However he is also developing a interest in classical music but rather than use the internet as with her high preference tastes, she listens to classical music through Classic FM. Her actions would suggest that music preferences have to reach a particular threshold within the individual's identity before he or she carries out the cultural practices with other high level music styles. It was also evident that due to shift and re-orientation of meaning of music styles, some individuals were willing to relinquish their aficionado status to explore music styles which appeared to be more salient to their identity. This too

would appear to underline the transitory nature of music preferences for some individuals but not for everyone.

The final area for discussion is the rise of the exo-identity. Assimilation of historical and cultural contexts removed from their own was unexpected. However, this finding is not without precedent. The English actor, comedian and singer/ musician Hugh Laurie plays the blues with an adopted American accent drawn from the Southern states of America. Laurie has admitted that this assimilated and adopted identity is as inherent to him as his white middle class English upbringing. He drew attention to this identity on his website in 2011 to promote the album *Let Them Talk*:

Let this record show that I am a white middle-class Englishman, openly trespassing on the music and myth of the American South […] I love this music, as authentically as I know how and I want you to love it too'.

The evidence from this study has shown that social forces can play a significant and pivotal role in the development and trajectory of music preferences across the lifespan. Yet although this study has also shown that music preferences are by no means static; it would also appear to hold true that the meaning and function of the music is also subject to fluctuations and manipulations in response to a number of psychological as well as social changes.

7.10 Future research

Future study will revise the dichotomous argument which has been the focus of academic concern and vociferous debate since Bourdieu' suggested in his book *Distinction* (1984) differences in intellectual and economic capital explained how individuals of different classes interpreted and conveyed artistic meaning and thus status (Rössell, 2011). Opposing arguments suggest that those of higher intellectual and economic power are omnivorous in their tastes, whereas those with less power are selective in their tastes, and are thus classed as univores (Peterson & Kern, 1996; Peterson & Simkus 1992; van Eijck, 2001). The rise of the pluralistic omnivore partaking in high and low status cultural fields has dominated much cultural and sociological discussions (Savage & Gayo, 2011) Yet in light of the findings of this

thesis, I will step away from being drawn into these arguments to propose that a that these arguments are based have largely become negated through changing personal and social relationships, and technological advancements.

The aim of my future study is to explore through a mixed methodological approach, the psychological and social process involved in the development and trajectory of music preferences. I will draw on Erikson's (1968) dimensions of Commitment and Exploration as well as a neo-Meadian symbolic interactionism to examine the factors which may explain why individuals are drawn and assimilate music styles within their own identity. I aim to examine why some individuals expand their music preference to become an aficionado within one or two music styles or artists and not other styles. I will also draw on semi-structure interviews to not only identify the specific psychological and social process involved but the lifespan experiences involved. From my research it is apparent that changing social contexts and exposure to a wide variety of music can have a significant impact on the trajectory. However, my research has also identified that music preferences are rarely fixed and so it would also be of high interest to map out the reasons behind the rejection or resumption of aficionado status. Yet it is argued that most people are omnivorous or at least they have more than one preferred taste in music thus negating the univore label in its truest sense. In addition, I will also argue that definitions of status are only relevant to the individual within that specific socio-cultural historical moment and due to evolving interpretations and meaning of genre, all definitions are just transient temporal-specific cultural moments. In effect the context of music preferences and the meaning of music are largely contemporaneous. Thus the intention of future research is to explore once again the trajectory of music preferences across the lifespan, but with a specific interest on the comparison between the use of media and type of listener.

I propose that an examination of the uses of media may reveal distinct patterns. For example, the aficionados may prefer to listen to 'music specialist' radio stations such as BBC Radio 3 or BBC Radio 6. However the broad minded aficionado would also accommodate mainstream music as part of his or her

music palate. This may be used to evoke past identities or just because they largely omnivorous in their tastes. The mainstream listeners again differ. The 'whatever is on' listener may feely switch between local radio stations, mainstream radio, and other types of non-expert classical music radio stations such as Classic FM. Finally the narrow minded 'I know what I like' mainstream listener is likely to engage with stations such as Classic FM or other stations which play a particular style of music-Planet Rock or Jazz FM.

However, I also suggest that due to shifting music palate, identity development and lifespan experiences, individuals may fluctuate between the aficionado and the mainstream listener. The findings from my research would suggest that some individuals used to be aficionados in one field with high level of engagement but due to identity shift or new personal and social relationships the music has become less important. They are still knowledgeable about the field but no longer attend gigs or read veraciously about the artist(s) from specialist media websites or high status music journals and newspapers. And so it is of great interest to examine their cultural practices to identify how or why individuals become aficionados and indeed determine the factors which shifted their high levels of engagement. Research questions may include: What factors lay claim to individuals becoming aficionados in music styles? How does this status relate to their own self-view of their identity? What is the relationship between Erikson's identity dimensions of Exploration and Commitment and the development of music preferences? Is there an upper age limit to becoming an aficionado? What other psychological or social processes are involved in this development? These questions remain so far unanswered. Examination of the development and trajectory of music preferences may reveal patterns of behaviour which are not widely understood largely because music preferences in adulthood have been widely overlooked. For example, it is of interest to determine if these preferences evolved through social interaction, recommendations from friends and family or through self-exploration through the use of the internet and

social media websites. It would also be very informative to identify if elderly individuals have increased

their usage of the internet to expand or explore their current tastes.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.1 Review of the objectives

In this final chapter it is my intention to situate the research from both studies within the wider research field. Although I will return to the original research questions posed in the introduction and literature searches for both studies; the results of either study will not be re-iterated in depth. In line with my model of profoundisation (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009), I will re-introduction some of the research and results from both the quantitative and qualitative studies to create a broader perspective of my research problem. One of the primary aims of this thesis has been to create a deeper understanding of the relationship between psychological and social processes on the development and trajectory of music preferences across the lifespan. I believe that I have answered the two fundamental questions which this thesis addressed. Firstly, I have demonstrated that music preferences evolve and shift and beyond adolescence which is a direct challenge to the current research position; and secondly, through a symbolic interactionist lens, I have explored some of the mechanisms how this evolution takes place. Macdonald, Hargreaves and Miell (2002) suggested that high levels of preference and engagement are integral to identity. I agree, which is why I believe that this thesis has demonstrated that due to identity development and maturation across the lifespan, the palate and level of expertise and engagement with music also shifts accordingly.   It is also been demonstrated that age, along with psychological and social processes have a marked effect on the trajectory of music preferences. In addition, I have argued that access to technological advancements has opened up wider opportunities for many individuals. However my research findings also suggest that the portability and interconnectivity of multi-media devices which has allowed immediate access to a wide range of music styles, has had a significant impact on the cultural practices of individuals. Music engagement is no longer restricted to a limited number of devices at home. Access can be instant and tailored to the needs of the individual, in effect the cultural practices in the last twenty years has been revolutionized by technological advancement to give greater power of

control to the individual. This power has allowed the individual to select and engage with the music at the location and time of their choice.

It is maintained here that the findings of these two studies make a small but significant contributions to current research on music preferences. I believe that the most important result of this thesis is to support my hypothesis that the trajectory of music preferences is not a static phenomenon, but subject to evolution across the lifespan. It has also been demonstrated that this evolution occurs in response to a number of psychological and social processes across the lifespan. The notion that music preferences can only be established within a critical period of adolescence has also been shown to be a false position. It was evident from the interviews that these preferences can develop at any age. It is also evident that a growing number of older persons of middle age and beyond are increasing their use of the internet to explore, consolidate and re-examine their established music preferences, or to evoke past identities or try music on the recommendation of family and friends through social and cultural media sites.

The vast majority of shift appears to occur as a natural progression associated with identity development and changing social contexts. Cook (1998) was correct to confirm that our music preferences are 'who we are'; but it is also apparent that these same music preferences are subject to evolutionary processes because they are no longer salient to our sense of identity. The second significant contribution of my research is to suggest that current survey based quantitative research exploring the relationship with individual differences or psychological processes, is simply insufficient on its own to explain why and when individuals develop these music preferences. My research findings appear to suggest that it is only through a relocation of the epistemological and methodological arguments that a full and broad perspective of the development and trajectory is made possible. In light of my research findings, I propose that further qualitative research is warranted to develop a wider perspective on music preferences. In particular, I suggest that further research using a symbolic interactionism provides an ideal quasi-theoretical framework to explore the development and trajectory of music preferences,

across a broad spectrum of ages, social classes, gender or other social determinants. Because symbolic interactionism is concerned how individuals create meaning out of everyday significant objects, activities, and interpret meaning of identity saliency through social interaction, it is perfectly situated to explore the symbolic nature of music as an object of the self across the lifespan.

I will of course discuss the limitations of this thesis. Finally I will explore my aims for future research, drawn from the findings of my research which will challenge the relevance of two frequently opposing themes; the cultural snob versus the omnivore- univore. However, following the findings of my research it is proposed that my future research will explore the idea that notions of aficionado and the mainstream are transient in nature. In essence I will explore the idea that due to a shifting evolving music palate and changing social contexts, individuals may vary in their levels of expertise.

8.2 Review of the problem

This thesis has confirmed that the trajectory of music preferences is subject to a number of different psychological and social dynamic processes. Most of the psychological processes such as personality traits and IQ were already well-established in the literature. However, it is also apparent from my research that other variables such as social factors (going to university; meeting and making new friendship groups), age and Erikson's identity dimensions also have a significant impact o the trajectory and regrettably these important variables have largely been overlooked. My research has made just a small contribution to the music psychology research community, concerned with the relationship between music preferences and personality traits, and in general the findings from my quantitative study support the findings of previous research (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; Pearson & Dollinger, 2003; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Zweigenhaft, 2008). There where however some significant differences between this study and other studies which need further explanation.

8.3 Individual differences and music

Although on the whole the relationship between personality traits supported previous studies, there are important areas of my research, which I believe warrant further discussion because it is suspected these areas may have a significant impact on the epistemological and methodological location of future research. The significant differences found between this study and the other two studies, on the relationship between Openness and preference ratings for the Upbeat and Conventional is of great interest. As noted early both Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008) found highly significant negative correlations, yet this study found zero correlation. However although I suspect that the differences may be due to a difference in cultural values, only further research based outside of the USA, may clarify this anomaly.

In the results section of the quantitative study I alluded to the fact that both the previous studies were carried out in the southern states of the US, informally known as the Bible belt. In addition, as Zweigenhaft (2008) noted, the Bible belt is well known for its neo-conservative fundamental Christian beliefs where it is not considered appropriate to question or seek out alternative beliefs or values. However, it is worthy to compare these differences with other studies carried out outside of the US. It is of interest to note that there have been two previous carried out in the Netherlands by Delsing *et al* (2008) and Dunn *et al* (2012). Neither study found any significant negative correlation between Openness and the music styles which make up the Upbeat and Conventional dimension. In fact Dunn *et al*, (2012) found a significantly positive correlation between Openness and religious music, although it should be noted that this is just one of the music styles to make up the Upbeat and Conventional dimension. In addition the dimensions used in the Delsing *et al* (2008) study were altered to account for the different cultural tastes. Dance and Electronica loaded on to their version of Upbeat and Conventional dimension rather than the Energetic & Rhythmic dimensions as proposed by Rentfrow& Gosling (2003) and Zweigenhaft (2008) because this form of music has been a mainstay of Dutch popular culture.

However, it is also true that Openness has many varied definitions and interpretations which can differ from being cultured to levels of intelligence (John *et al,* 1994; John & Srivastava, 1999). Thus serious question are raised concerning the fifth factor and the interpretations drawn between this and music preferences. My study partially separated these issues by introducing estimated IQ as an additional variable. However the results from this study suggest that there is little evidence of any distinct patterns or mirroring between Openness and IQ. In which case, it may be inferred that Openness is less concerned with intelligence but to hold closer associations with a desire to be open to new cultures and to enjoy cultural challenges (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007; John & Srivastatava, 1999; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). I propose that future research which explores Openness as a quasi-variable for intelligence should also actively measure levels of intelligence to verify this relationship between Openness and IQ. By adopting this approach, it may be possible to create a clearer picture on the attributes of the fifth factor and its relationship with music preferences and intelligence.

There is one other important finding from the quantitative study which holds particular importance, the relationship between Openness, age and the Reflective and Complex dimension. The findings from my study supported the other two to identify strong positive correlations between Openness and the Reflective and Complex dimension. Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, (2007) associated Openness as a measure of intelligence and a desire to be challenged. The authors noted that individuals who had high Openness scores also had high IQ scores and they liked to use complex music because it challenged them. However in this study IQ was not strongly associated with the Reflective and Complex dimension or Openness as identified earlier. In addition to the correlation analysis, the standard regression analysis for the whole population revealed that Agreeableness, Openness, age and Exploration were all significant predictors of this dimension. These results appear to suggest that a high rating for the Reflective and Complex dimension is strongly associated with age and a desire to be challenged or explore new ideas. Whether this exploration is associated with a re-examination of current committed values and choices

(Marcia, 1966, Kroger & Marcia, 2012)) or interpreted as a desire to try new and unfamiliar choices prior to Commitments (Meus, Iedema & Maassen) remains so far unexplained.

Although Exploration and Openness share many lexical attributes, Erikson's identity dimension Exploration does not appear to be blighted by significant different interpretations. Although it should be noted that is slight difference of opinion whether Exploration precedes lifestyle commitments (Marcia, 1966; Kroger & Marcia, 2012) or whether Exploration is largely concerned with the maintenance of current commitments (Meeus, Iedema and Maassen, 2002), in my opinion these differences are a moot point. In any case both sides of this minor debate are mainly concerned with the transition to identity development in adolescence and not across the whole lifespan, as espoused by Erikson (1968). In view of the differences of interpretation which exist around Openness, perhaps Exploration may be a stronger and more reliable indicator of a desire to seek alternative choices and an interest in trying new experiences, cultures or social activities than Openness. However the important issue here preferences for Reflective and Complex are strongly related to age. This finding was supported by the interviews. A number of participants aged in their twenties noted that they were keen to explore classical music, though of course this is not the only music style to make up this genre. However the independent-samples t-tests revealed that of the eight styles where significant differences between the age groups were found, six of these were part of the Reflective dimension. In all six music styles, older participants gave higher ratings than younger participants. The only exceptions were Religious music which is part of the Upbeat and Conventional dimension and Rap /Hip-Hop music, which was the only style which was rated significantly higher by younger participants. Thus age does appear to be a significant predictor for certain music styles however caution is required before any significant conclusions can be made.

Some studies have noted that beyond adolescence, there may be a shift in levels of Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness (Helson, Jones & Kwan, 2002; Roberts, Walton and Viechtbauer, 2006; Srivasta, John, Gosling & Potter, 2003), though the patterns of change are inconsistent (Jones &

Meredith, 1996). In contrast, other researchers (Costa & McCrae, 1986, 1994; Terraciano, McCrae & Costa, 2010) have adopted William James' (1890/ 1950) maxim, to take the opposite view to suggest that personality traits are 'set like plaster'. This position proposes that personality stabilizes at around thirty years of age. In addition, although personality traits were robust predictors of music preference ratings, the low adjusted R^2 scores revealed by the regression analysis appear to suggest that that these psychological process alone cannot provide adequate explanation to predict how, when and why music preferences form. Secondly, in light of these low adjusted R^2 scores, it is proposed that there are many other factors which may explain why individuals prefer one style over another. Interestingly, both Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, (2007) and Giles *et al*, (2009) have suggested that complex music tends to be rated by younger individuals simply due to under-exposure and unfamiliarity. This may be true but this position does not take into account other social factors which my qualitative study revealed to influence music preferences. For example the individual may hold negative impressions of the music because of enforced listening to classical music listening at school, or because it is considered to be low prestige music, representative of out-groups. Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham (2007) also noted that one of the reasons why complex music such as jazz and classical music may be rejected is because young individuals are not exposed to these styles within popular music and media culture. However as my research has identified, music styles often fluctuate in popularity. For example as noted earlier, folk music is undergoing a resurgence of popularity, whereas indie rock and emo music has largely disappeared from popular culture. In addition it was interesting to note how some younger individuals assimilated music styles, popular decades before they were born, into their own music palate. The interviews suggested that the electro-pop music of the 1980s is now of high cultural status. In essence my research suggests that the relationship between individual difference and music preferences is not fixed but fluid, limited in its temporality and subject to identity development, age and social forces which have been ignored.

8.4 The importance of age to shape preferences across the lifespan

My research has also confirmed that age identity maturity and age play a significant role on the trajectory of music preferences. Not only is age a significant predictor of certain music styles, but the naturally occurring social changes which come into play during adulthood are also significant. In particular this thesis has significantly challenged the notion that the trajectory of music preference crystallises beyond the age of 24 years without further adjustment across the lifespan (Delsing *et al*, 2008; Holbrook & Schindler, 1989). It has been demonstrated that not only are preferences subject to evolution with a marked shift in function and reorientation and meaning but also challenges the relationship between music preferences and personality traits.

The higher levels of Exploration and Commitment found in the older participants and appear to support the notion proposed by Stephen *et al* (1992) of the MAMA (Moratorium-Achievement-Moratorium-Achievement) identity status cycle in adulthood. The evidence from the interviews supported the notion that music preferences undergo a continual process of exploration, commitment, evolution and renegotiation across the lifespan. Only one participant (JR: M, 40, India) in the group aged over 25 demonstrated true univorous taste stasis. In his late teens he had developed a high preference for heavy metal and rock music and this music had retained its high personal high status without any exploration or deviation of alternative music styles. Otherwise, all other participants demonstrated that their taste palate had shifted to accommodate new tastes or they had re-appraised and shifted or re-committed their music taste established in adolescence. However, although some were able to pinpoint an exact moment or event in their lives to explain the shift in their music preferences, most identified that the shift occurred gradually. These results would appear to suggest that a re-examination and re-orientation of the function and saliency of music preferences to one's identity is a natural progression, associated with identity maturation and changing social factors or contexts. In short it is probably unwise to come down on either psychological or social processes as the determinant cause. The reality is that the both sides

have considerable impact on the trajectory of music preferences and it would be very difficult to separate the two.

8.5 Genre Interpretation

It was also noted that socio-cultural differences had some effect the interpretation of music genres. However it as also noteworthy that many participants did not discuss their preferences in terms of genres but what it did to them and how they used it (Greasley *et al*, 2013; Krause & Hargreaves, 2013; Rubin, 1994;). As Krause & Hargreaves noted, 'Although music the industry continues to categorize music in terms of genres and styles, it is clear that individuals do not follow suit […]. As a consequence of these findings, it is proposed that there a two options available. Either a more nuanced geographical or culturally specific approach is adopted (Christenson and Peterson, 1988) or perhaps it may be more prudent to move away from researcher constructed lists towards a qualitative exploration of individuals' own definitions and classifications (cf. Chamorro-Premuzic *et al*, 2009). Evidence from the semi-structured interviews supported my concerns that there were varying interpretations of the music genres. Discussions on various rock, punk, heavy metal, jazz and classical music to name but a few, revealed that not all fans of one type of music necessarily agreed to the common attributes or even the artists who belonged within the genres. For example Nik (18, Russia) noted that the music styles classified as heavy metal or rock in the 1980s (Whitesnake, Iron Maiden; Def Leppard and Judas Priest) are not considered today to be part of these genres. He suggested that retro rock/popular music would be more appropriate. Bryson (1996) has already drawn caution to researcher constructed lists, noting that there is a high risk of disparity of understanding between the researcher and the respondent's interpretations of the music genre. This study has supported Bryson's concern. Therefore, perhaps it is time to adopt an alternative approach. That is to that it may be more prudent to move away from pre-determine lists to adopt a more qualitative or an ethnographic approach to analyse individual's interpretation of their preferences through interviews. Although it is recognized that this approach may produce a very long list of music styles, it is a proposed that through thematic coding and analysis (Braun

& Clarke, 2006), a more accurate perspective of music genres may be drawn together. In essence, this list may be organized into specific sociological, historically and geographically orientated themes, which may reduce the risk of cross-cultural misinterpretation. Indeed it is suggested that my research has demonstrated that a methodological shift is beneficial to develop a broader understanding on how music preferences are developed, negotiated, re-examined and re-appraised according to identity saliency.

My research has also challenged the accepted patterns of like and dislikes. For example, it is a widely received notion that if an individual likes classical music then he or she will probably dislike dance/electronica for the incessant beat and very simple harmonic progression. Though as I have suggested, preference shift and as such the notions of a like-dislike continuum should be interpreted as temporary. This may spurn future research on music websites which propose recommendations on individuals' listening patterns such as Spotify, but I will return to this in my recommendations for future research. In addition, several participants noted that one of the primary reasons for this like-dislike bipolar continuum was that in adolescence, they felt that they had to conform to the socially constructed rules of the group or face ridicule or rejection. In other words they admitted to liking 'negative prestige' music but due to peer pressure, they felt unable to go against the wishes of the group. Pressure such as this demonstrates the importance of social group membership in adolescence. However, in adulthood the same pressure to conform is less acute. For example, Davenz (M: 25) liked Nu-metal & heavy metal from approximately 15 years of age. Rap and hip-hop and most black urban music was considered highly negative prestige, though he was keen to point out that he was not aware of any overt racial aggravation or antagonism. The main dislike for his music group was the style of clothing associated with this urban music, with the low slung trousers minus a belt to copy the (death row) prisoners. Yet by the time he was 19, Davenz was a big fan of rap, hip-hop and as well as grunge rock and heavy metal/ industrial metal. His account was not atypical. Nik, in his mid teens, used to be virtually univorous, only listening to heavy metal, death thrash metal, nu-metal and alternative metal. He admitted that he used to dislike

all forms of rap, hip-hop, R&B, Dance electronica, though not because of any peer pressure. However

over the last year his preferences have shifted and have undergone a re-orientation. He no longer

engages with alternative or nu-metal to the same level as before. In addition, the function of the music

has shifted from one of image management to look threatening to its current function of nostalgia. He

used to wear T-shirts depicted with graphic violent gory imagery, but now h no longer feels the need to

appear threatening. It is 'just not me anymore'. His current music tastes include jazz, classical music

and electro/ dance and dubstep. Therefore it would appear that there has been a marked shift in

listening practices for the vast majority of participants in my study. However, it is difficult to be sure if

this results are pertinent to this group alone or easily replicable with another study in the UK. It is

possible that the vast array of different music engagement practices may be due to socio-cultural events

such exposure to unfamiliar music styles, different cultural contexts and media output or just a natural

form of cultural enquiry. It may also be due to high Openness which as was noted earlier, may be

associated with high intelligence as well. Further studies may wish to compare these results with a

different socio-economic group, or other individuals who perhaps have not had the chance to go to

university, emigrate or even embark on extensive travel.

8.6 The broader perspective

Although the use of survey based research and Likert type scales is very useful to understand the

relationship between psychological processes and music preferences; there are considerable limitations

which have to be taken into account. I am not suggesting that there should be a total shift away from

quantitative methodology towards an exclusively qualitative research position. The use of surveys and

Likert type scales has been shown to be extremely useful to analyse large amounts of data. However for

my quantitative study, it has been shown that they can only provide a snapshot of music tastes,

personality traits and identity development. This is fairly problematic on a number of levels. My

research has shown that music preferences evolve across the lifespan. Erikson (1968) noted that identity

development, by its very nature evolves across the whole lifespan and not just in adolescence. Although

there is evidence that personality traits also evolve, though the patterns of progression appear to be variable. In addition there are marked limitations to understand the social contexts of music preferences, explore individuals' meanings and experiences with music and of course map out the development and trajectory of music tastes across the lifespan. I believe that my mixed methodological approach has created an in-depth exploration of music preferences across the lifespan. However I also believe that to incorporate social factors, experiences and meaning alongside psychological processes into the research methodology is to mirror Erikson's firm belief that these same social factors are just as important to identity development as psychological processes (Côté & Levine, 1988, 2002; van Hoof, 1999a) and Mead's definition of the multidimensional emergent self. Thus it is my intention to incorporate both Erikson and Mead for future research but at first I will sum up why and how symbolic interactionism has informed my qualitative study.

8.7 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism has shown to be an extremely useful framework to understand how individuals create meaning out of their music preferences. Although it has been established that music is an inherent aspect of our identity, it is surprising that this framework which explores significant objects as symbolic representations of identity has been taken up by more researchers. In my opinion, symbolic interactionism as a quasi-theoretical tool provides the perfect malleable theoretical framework to explore qualitative research in music psychology. Through Blumer's (1969) interpretation of Meadian theory the central canon of symbolic interactionism was created. This approach is concerned how individuals create meaning out of objects but also how they see themselves (Hansen & Hansen, 1991; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003) and how they interpret others' interpretations of their actions and preferences.

Symbolic interactionism may be viewed as an extension of the uses and gratifications theory (Roy, 2009; Rubin, 2002). Rubin suggested that this theory can explain the relationship between individuals and their use of different media. However, Rubin's oft quoted comment that it is what the media does to the

people but what the people do with the media has strong echoes of neo-Meadian symbolic interactionism. However the main difference between these approaches is that the uses and gratifications approach is largely concerned with psychological processes alone, whereas symbolic interactionism is a socially orientated quasi-theoretical framework. However, both share a humanist centred approach to action and behaviour with media. I have also argued within this thesis that symbolic interactionism not only explains the mechanisms behind the development and uses of music but underlines the position that action and agency associated should be understood within the scientific, pragmatic real world experiences of the individual.

Meadian theory has also informed my arguments how the meaning and function has evolved across the lifespan in response to a number of psycho-social challenges across the lifespan. In fact, a comparison of Erikson's theories on identity development and Mead's emergent self through social interaction and personal experiences, belie a number of similarities. Both Mead and Erikson noted that the self /identity was not just made up of psychological processes but evolved in light of a number of psycho-social crises or experiences. Alarid & Vega (2010) have not only noted the theoretical similarities between the Mead and Erikson, but they too argue that there is an over-reliance in identity research to use predominantly adolescent populations. It is perhaps of no surprise to note that in addition to their criticisms on the narrow focus on the adolescent population, Alarid & Vega (2010) raise concern that most research is not analysed from an Eriksonian perspective but through Marcia's operationalisation model. However, in view of the similarities between Erikson and Mead, it is my intention to carry out future research with these two formidable theorists of identity research in mind. I will discuss my aims for future research but before I do so I will discuss some of the limitations of my thesis.

8.8 Limitations

The greatest limitation of this thesis is beyond doubt the profoundisation model. It was difficult not to provide a chronological analysis rather than a reflective academic study. It would have been better to set

out from the very beginning a blended model. It may also have been beneficial to ask the participants in my interview study to fill out the questionnaires on the Big Five, EIPQ and the pre-morbid demographic estimated IQ. The information provided would have provided a strong data set with which to compare and triangulate the findings between the quantitative and qualitative studies and in turn provide greater weight to the arguments. However I aim to rectify this anomaly for future research. I also recognize that the concept of identity used throughout this thesis is based around an individualized Western concept of identity. Individuals of Asian/ Oriental origin tend to have a communal based sense of identity and so the findings of these studies may not apply to this particular population.

In addition both studies were carried on a cross-sectional basis further research may explore the significant influences on the trajectory of music preferences through a longitudinal framework. A longitudinal approach to identity development, supported by an interpretation through symbolic interactionism, may provide a more accurate picture of the development and trajectory of music preferences in relation to identity development, identity saliency and lifespan experiences.

My final point is to complete the cycle and return to the title of this thesis. It was borrowed from an interview I heard in the car with James Wong, ethno-botanist horticulturist, award winning RHS Chelsea flower show garden designer and television presenter of English-Malaysian heritage. The interviewer questioned him on how much influence his Malaysian heritage had on his garden designs and choice of foliage. In short he was asked if he felt more English or Malaysian. James' answer was simple but incredibly thought provoking. His reply was, "My identity? It's all magpies and mirrors isn't it?" His answer neatly steps away from being drawn towards a dichotomous answer, but perhaps more importantly he has captured the essence of identity flux. The subject of identity belongs to everyone there is no single concept of identity. In my attempt to address the relationship between identity and music, I believe that I have shown that music preferences and identity cannot be explained by psychological processes alone. Although there appears to be a fairly robust relationship between the

psychological process of identity and music preferences, examination of these alone is insufficient. Social process which have been overlooked for too long, also have a significant impact on how we see ourselves and like to be seen (Erikson, 1968; Mead, 1934). Music fulfils this function very well on a number of psycho-social levels. In their quest for their own identity, many young individuals borrow, assimilate and reflect the thoughts, actions and beliefs of others to understand their own identity, their position in society. I believe that it has been demonstrated that music is an inherent symbolic representation of identity. In short identity cannot be defined, and so the relationship between music and identity cannot be neatly packaged like a commodity. It is a fluid multi-faceted, multi-dimensional concept that belongs to no-one school of thought. Erikson himself refused to be drawn into creating a specific definition of identity. His comments (1968: 208) below denote the fluid psycho-social dimensions of identity:

At one time it [identity] seemed to refer to a conscious sense of individual uniqueness, at another to an unconscious stirring for continuity of experience, and at a third, as a solidarity with a group's ideals […] Identity in its vagueness sense suggests of course, much of what has been called the self by a variety of workers, be it in the form of a self-concept, self-esteem, or in that of fluctuating self experience […].

Music is who we are (Cook, 1998: Frith, 1996), but it is also important to remember that identity development occurs across the lifespan and the relationship between music and identity is not necessarily a fixed concept. Beyond doubt, this thesis has demonstrated that music preferences are subject to change and evolution of meaning due to a broad variety of expected and unexpected events across the lifespan.

APPENDIX A

The Big Five Inventory (BFI)
(John & Srivastava, 1999)

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

I see Myself as Someone Who…

____1. Is talkative
____2. Tends to find fault with others
____3. Does a thorough job
____4. Is depressed, blue
____5. Is original, comes up wth new ideas
____6. Is reserved
____7. Is helpful and unselfish with others
____8. Can be somewhat careless
____9. Is relaxed, handles stress well
____10. Is curious about many different things
____11. Is full of energy
____12. Starts quarrels with others
____13. Is a reliable worker
____14. Can be tense
____15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker
____16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm
____17. Has a forgiving nature
____18. Tends to be disorganized
____19. Worries a lot
____20. Has an active imagination
____21. Tends to be quiet
____22. Is generally trusting

____23. Tends to be lazy
____24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
____25. Is inventive
____26. Has an assertive personality
____27. Can be cold and aloof
____28. Perseveres until the task is finished
____29. Can be moody
____30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences
____31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited
____32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone
____33. Does things efficiently
____34. Remains calm in tense situations
____35. Prefers work that is routine
____36. Is outgoing, sociable
____37. Is sometimes rude to others
____38. Makes plans and follows through with them
____39. Gets nervous easily
____40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas
____41. Has few artistic interests
____42. Likes to cooperate with others
____43. Is easily distracted
____44. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature

Please check: Did you write a number in front of each statement?

APPENDIX B

Items for Ego Identity Process Questionnaire

(Balistreri, Buschnagel & Geisinger, 1995)

Please indicate for each statement your level of agreement

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Slightly Disagree**	**Slightly Agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**

I have definitely decided on the occupation I want to pursue.

I don't expect to change my political principles and ideals.

I have considered adopting different kinds of religious beliefs.

There has never been a need to question my values.

I am confident about what kinds of friends are best for me.

My ideas about men's and women's roles have never changed as I became older.

I will always vote for the same political party.

I have firmly held views concerning my role in my family.

I have engaged in several discussions concerning behaviours involved in dating relationships.

I have considered different political views thoughtfully.

I have never questioned my views concerning what kind of friend is best for me.

My values are likely to change in the future.

When I talk to people about religion, I make sure to voice my opinion.

I am not sure about what type of dating relationship is best for me.

I have not felt the need to reflect upon the importance I place on my family.

Regarding religion, my beliefs are likely to change in the near future.

I have definite views regarding the ways in which men and women should behave.

I have tried to learn about different occupational fields to find the best one for me.

I have undergone several experiences that made me change my views on men's and women's roles.

I have consistently re-examined many different values in order to find the ones which are best for me.

I think what I look for in a friend could change in the future.

I have questioned what kind of date is right for me.

I am unlikely to alter my vocational goals.

I have evaluated many ways in which I fit into my family structure.

My ideas about men's and women's roles will never change.

I have never questioned my political beliefs.

I have never had many experiences that led me to review the qualities that I would like my friends to have.

I have discussed religious matters with a number of people who believe differently than I do.

I am not sure that the values I hold are right for me.

I have never questioned my occupational aspirations.

The extent to which I value my family is likely to change in the future.

My beliefs about dating are firmly held.

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA
(Barona, Reynolds & Chastain, 1984)

1. Exact Age_____

2.

Age	Category number	Tick the appropriate box
16 to 17 years	1	
18 to 19 years	2	
20 to 24 years	3	
25 to 34 years	4	
35 to 44 years	5	
45 to 54 years	6	
55 to 64 years	7	
65 to 69 years	8	
70 to 74 years	9	

3. Please indicate your sex

Sex	Category number	Tick the appropriate box
Female	1	
Male	2	

4. Please indicate the appropriate category to describe your race:

Race	Category number	Tick the appropriate box
Black	1	
Other ethnicity	2	
White	3	

5. Please indicate your usual place of residence (for university students, this means outside of university term time)

Residence	Category number	Tick the appropriate box
Rural	1	
Urban	2	

6. Please indicate the appropriate category to describe your level of education, based on the number of full time years you have spent at school:

Education category	Category number	Tick the appropriate box
0 to 7 years	1	
8 years	2	
9 to 11 years	3	
12 years	4	
13 to 15 years	5	
16 or more years	6	

7. Please indicate the appropriate category to describe your occupation:

Occupation category	Category number	Tick the appropriate box
Farm laborers, farm foremen, and laborers (unskilled workers)	1	
Operatives, service workers, farmers, and farm managers (semiskilled)	2	
Not in the labour force	3	
Craftsmen and foremen (skilled workers)	4	
Managers, proprietors, clerical, and sales workers	5	
Professional, Technical	6	

APPENDIX D

STOMP-R

(Rentfrow& Gosling, 2006)

Please indicate your basic preference for each of the following genres using the scale provided.

1-----------------2-----------------3----------------4----------------5----------------6----------------7

| Dislike | Dislike | Dislike a | Neither like | Like a little | Like | Like |
| Strongly | Moderately | Little | or dislike | | Moderately | Strongly |

1. _____ Alternative
2. _____ Bluegrass
3. _____ Blues
4. _____ Classical
5. _____ Country
6. _____ Dance/Electronica
7. _____ Folk
8. _____ Funk
9. _____ Gospel
10. _____ Heavy Metal
11. _____ International/Foreign
12. _____ Jazz
13. _____ New Age
14. _____ Oldies
15. _____ Opera
16. _____ Pop
17. _____ Punk
18. _____ Rap/hip-hop
19. _____ Reggae
20. _____ Religious
21. _____ Rock
22. _____ Soul/R&B
23. _____ Soundtracks/theme song

APPENDIX E

SCATTERGRAM ANALYSIS OF UPBEAT AND CONVENTIONAL MUSIC AND OPENNESS
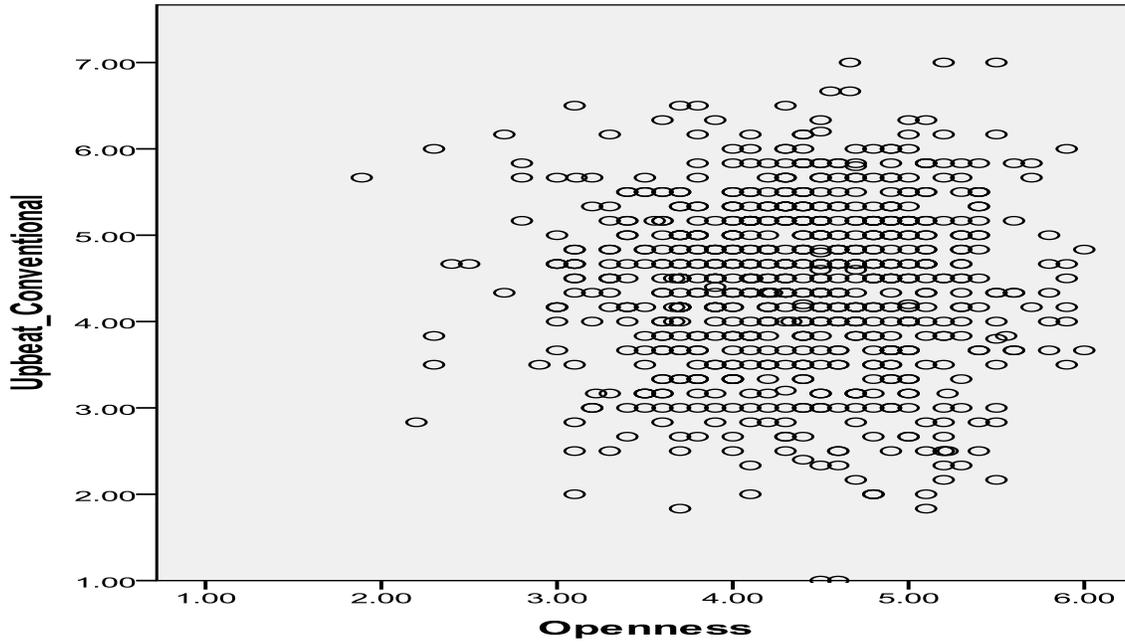
APPENDIX F
Quantitative-Debriefing Sheet

Thank you for your time in undertaking this study, your contribution is highly valued and appreciated.

The purpose of this study is to explore whether music preferences evolve post adolescence in relation to individual differences of personality traits, identity and IQ. The vast majority of research on music preferences has focused on how adolescents use music as a badge of identity. Research also suggests that music preferences consolidate during early adulthood. Central to this study is whether adults' preferences evolve either through external events (lifespan experiences), or as a reflection of internal individual differences.

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this study or would like to find about the results of this study at a later date then please contact the researcher via e-mail on r.leadbeater1@lancaster.co.uk who will be happy to assist wherever possible.

Thank you once again for your participation.

Richard Leadbeater (PhD research Student)
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Appendix G

List of interviewees who attended for an interview on the trajectory of music preferences, as part of my submission for PhD Music. 17 October – 21 November 2012

Office B127, County Main Building, Lancaster University.

Pseudonym	Age	Nationality
Thomas	18	British
Lucy	18	Lithuanian
Charlotte	18	British
Nik (M)	18	Russian
Harvey	18	British
Robert	18	British
Anne	18	British
Leylim (F)	18	British-(Anglo-Turkish)
Luzi (F)	19	Chinese
Katherine	19	British
Elizabeth	19	British
Lady G	19	Anglo-American
Sarah	19	British
Kathryn	19	Irish
Paul	19	British
Dexter	20	British
Nicole	20	Ukrainian
Mike	20	Romanian
Megan	20	Polish
Andy	20	Norwegian
Andi (F)	20	Cypriot (Gr)
Wolfgang	20	British
Sam (M)	20	British
Nat (F)	20	British
Richard	20	British
Sarah	21	British
Artemis (F)	21	Chinese
Lara	22	British
Willow (F)	22	British

Liulate (F)	23	Chinese
Bertram	23	British
Sherry	23	Chinese
Bella	23	Chinese
Tea (M)	24	British
Elaine	24	British
Bess	24	British
Christa	24	Greek
Davenz (M)	25	NZ
Alvis (F)	25	British
Alex (F)	26	British
Emma	26	British
Grace	28	British
Martin	30	Croatian
TJ (M)	30	British
Will	31	British
Ludo (M)	34	Greek
Florence	34	British
Danni	36	British
Justine	36	British (Anglo-Indian)
Andy	36	British
Taghreed (F)	37	Saudi
Jay (M)	40	Indian
Sharon	42	British
Webspun (M)	44	British
Marie	46	British
Jane	47	British
Margaret	53	British
Ieuan	56	British
Hilary	58	British
Andrew	66	British
Angela	66	British
David	73	British

APPENDIX H
INFORMATION SHEET

The information collected during this research will be used in the submission of my PhD thesis at Lancaster University. The aim of this study is to explore how your music preferences developed, from late childhood through adolescence and beyond. In particular, I am interested in how you select music and why. Also, I will explore how your life story may have shaped your preferences. Data will be used in presentations to academics and practitioners and will remain completely confidential and anonymous. Any publication or dissemination of the data will use descriptive statistics rather than individual data points.

If you agree to participate, the only demographic data I need is your age and gender. You will also be asked to suggest a pseudonym and a numerical code. The choice of pseudonym/code is entirely your choice and will be kept secure and anonymous.

Participation in this study is entirely on a voluntary basis and you are free to withdraw at any time. To withdraw from the study, please feel free to leave the room. All data will be kept in a secure location. No information given by you will be traceable and will only be accessed by the researcher and academic supervisors. It will not be possible to provide feedback from the information provided by you.

If you kindly agree to participate in this study, then please complete the consent form below.

Thank you

Principal Researcher: Richard Leadbeater

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Tel: 07944 871706

However, should you have any comments or concerns either before or after the study then please contact my supervisor, Dr Alan Marsden, Senior Lecturer in Music on a.marsden@lancaster.ac.uk.

If you are still not satisfied and you wish to take the matter further, then your complaint may be addressed to Dr Andrew Quick, Director LICA on a.quick@lancaster.ac.uk

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APPENDIX I
Qualitative Debriefing Sheet

Thank you for your time in undertaking this study, your contribution is highly valued and appreciated.

The purpose of this study is to explore how music preferences develop and evolve post adolescence, taking into account the impact of life experiences. The vast majority of research on music preferences has primarily focused on how adolescents use music as a badge of identity or as a tool to cope with the problems associated with adolescence. Beyond a few articles that suggest that music preferences may consolidate during early adulthood, very little is known about music preferences beyond adolescence. Central to this study is the notion that adolescents and adults use music in a number of ways that reflect the multiple types of identities that exist as part of our daily lives.

In the very unlikely event that this study has invoked some unpleasant memories or emotions, I attach the Lancaster University counseling service link and telephone number below. All information will always be treated in the strictest confidence.

For staff-HR Counselling Telephone 01524 5 92690 or www.lancs.ac.uk/hr

For students**– www.dpa.lancs.ac.uk/approved/counselling.doc**

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this study or would like to find about the results of this study at a later date then please contact the researcher via e-mail on r.leadbeater1@lancaster.co.uk who will be happy to assist wherever possible.

Thank you once again for your participation.

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Appendix J-Interview Schedule

(Prompts in brackets)

Trajectory

Looking back at your early tastes in early adolescence, what music styles did you like?

What were your main influences-friends / parents/ siblings? Do you still like to listen to those groups now?

Was there peer pressure to listen to certain music styles?

Did you conform or rebel against the pressure? **Conformers**-How did the group respond when you conformed? Were you accepted? **Rebel**-Was that a good feeling or did you get hassle because of your stance?

Were you alone or were there others who enjoyed being outside of the main 'cool' clique? Was being an outsider ironically high prestige?

Is there any music that you rejected as an adolescent or at any time of your life that you would never listen to now? Why? (Relationship / embarrassment of past identity and values, political beliefs/specific event/ historical events?

Do you listen to music styles now that as an adolescent you rejected? What's changed?

Do you listen to music styles now that you'd never heard before-(Cultural Exposure/ social communities/ travel)

What factor triggered a shift in these preferences?

Are your tastes broader or narrower than they were in adolescence?

Trajectory and identity

Looking back at those early tastes, how do you feel about them now? (Retrospective view of identity)

Would you say that they that they are no longer 'you'? How have you changed? –(Religious, political, vegetarianism etc)

Are your music preferences today, more or less important than adolescence?

Exposure

Overseas students-Since coming to the UK have your preferences remained the same or have the shifted? How?

Do you listen to more music from home or UK music? What styles do you like-mainstream pop music/ classical?

If it is more home / national music is this alone or with fellow nationals? Are there any particular triggers-talking with partner or parents back home?

Function

What are the main reasons you listen to music? (Relaxation / Getting ready to go out/ to induce happy or negative emotions/ Uplift my mood/ helps me study/ fantasy situations- or to enter a dream like state)

What are the main functions? Has the function of their music changed?

If so why and when? Is the change of function related to natural progression, (no longer relevant to who I am anymore), or was this triggered by any particular event in your life? (Meeting new partner / unexpected event?

Technology:

Has technology affected the way you listen to your music? If so how? On average per day, how many hours do you devote to listening?

Is this more or less than 5, 10, 15 20+ years ago? (Adapt back to adolescence)

How do they listen to music now and when? (Downloads/ Vinyl/ CD/ Cassette/ Radio)? Is there a hierarchy of devices that dictates how you listen to music? (Vinyl for certain high status groups)

Do you use the internet to download music? Do you create playlists? Is this a new experience for you (for older participants aged 40+)? Do you use music streaming sites such as Spotify, Soundcloud?

Is there a difference in the types of music you are looking for?

If you search for music do you search by genre, by artists, or by specific words i.e chillout electronica; piano music; Ibiza ?

Do you listen to the radio? If so which station do you use and why? (Mainstream BBC 1 / 2/ Classic FM vs Specialist Connoisseur radio stations BBC 6 & BBC 3 or other such high status stations?

Do you differ in the way you use the internet to play or search for music?-(Hierarchy of tastes)

If they have a large vinyl collection, do they still down load music?

If so, is it all types of music, high status or low status music?

Appendix K

Coding & Themes

Values. V1-Left wing Political . V2-Vegetarianism. V3-Anti-abortion. V4-Anti-drugs V5 Religion V6 Rejection of corporate values V7 Miners strike V8 Positive political role model V9 Anti war

Trajectory shift triggers. TT1-Past Relationship. TT2-New relationship. TT3 New cultural experiences. TT4 Influence of family member. TT5 University friendship groups TT6 Internet searching TT7 Social and media websites TT8 Peer pressure TT9 Political upheaval TT10 War TT11 Loss of religious identity TT12 Loss of political identity TT13 Betrayal TT14 Altruism TT15 Loss of friendship TT16 Depression / Mental illness TT17 Hospitalisation TT18 Leaving university-new social groups TT19 War-Invasion of troops from different culture.

Trajectory T1Parents' tastes. T2-Mother T3 Father T4 Sibling T5 High prestige group T6 Low prestige groups T7 Religious identity T8 Professional medical opinion T9 Political values T10 Friendship T11 National identity growing up T12 Same sex partner T13 Spouse partner T14 Shift in sense of identity and values

Emotions- E1Sorrow E2Pride E3Memories. E4Loss E5 Anger E6 Embarrassment E7 Ridicule E8 Willingly seeking out negative emotions. E7 Fantasy experience E8 Self loathing E8 Betrayal

Function. F1-Nostalgia. F2-Social / Clubbing F3 Hanging out with friends F4 Confirmation of national identity F5 Rejection of national identity F6 Symbolic of relationship F7 It's the most important thing of my life F8 Relaxation F9 Memories of family F10 Coping mechanism F11 Appearance as an intellectual F12 Housework background F13 Spiritual /Religious identity F14 Return to past rejected music tastes F14 Liked to be seen as cultural snob F15 Random selection

Hierarchy. H1-Download. H2. Vinyl H3-CD. H4-Cassette. H5-Mainstream radio. H6-Specialist radio. H7 Shift in hierarchy H8 Social media websites

Object of the self. Ob1 Childhood memories. Ob2 Illness Ob3 Object as a gift Ob4 Loss of object Ob5 Hierarchy of object-vinyl. Ob6 Hierarchy Downloads Ob7 CDs Ob8 Visual pride being seen with object. Ob9 Self view of connoisseur Ob10 Anger at being seen with object Ob 11 Sexual identity Ob 12 Feminine identity Ob13 Represents significant traumatic event Ob14 Symbolic of relationship Ob15 Financial investment Ob16 Identity as a musician Ob17 Loss or shift in sense of identity-not me anymore

Importance I1 More important than adolescence younger years. I2 Less importance than adolescence younger years. I3 No different from adolescence younger years. I4 Same but different function / just different.

Exposure Ex1 Overseas student; Ex 2. Eureka; Ex3. Travel Ex4 Neighbours Ex5 New media-radio Ex6 New media-cultural event Ex7 internet searching Ex8 TV Ex 9 Isolation from culture Ex10 Can't understand the lyrics (foreign language) but I like the music Ex11 Spouse-partners' tastes Ex12 New friendship social groups

Social SP1 Pressure to conform SP2 SP3 Lesbian identity SP4 National identity in foreign land SP5 Friendshp groups SP6 Positive role as outsider SP7 Accepted as outsider No-one cared what I looked like SP8 Dance clubs

Engagement EN1 Background EN2 Illegal downloads EN3 Memories & nostalgia EN4 Streaming sites EN5 high prestige specialist radio stations

Exo Identity Ex 1Cultural; Ex2 Temporal; Ex3 Physical agency Ex4 Fantasy identity

Lifespan events LE1 Illness hospitalisation LE2 Wow LE3 Bereavement LE4 Loss of relationship LE 5 Start of new relationship LE6 Parents' divorce LE7 Bullying

Appendix L

Full Quantitative Data

Table 1.4a Standard multiple regression analysis to predict preference ratings for each music dimension, using the Big Five, identity dimensions and age as predictors (n=763).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Reflective and Complex	Extraversion	. 04	.04	-. 04	- 1.18	.24
	Agreeableness	.16	.05	.12	3.48	< .01
	Conscientiousness	-. 08	.04	-.07	-1.8	.07
	Neuroticism	.06	.04	.06	1.54	.13
	Openness	.35	.05	.27	7.24	< .001
	Commitment	-.00	.00	-. 02	.53	.60
	Exploration	.01	.00	.01	2.68	< .01
	Age	.22	.00	.22	6.29	<. 001

Note: Adjusted R^2 = .18, F (8, 754) = 22.07, p < .001

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Intense & Rebellious	Extraversion	-. 1	.06	-. 07	-1.81	. 07
	Agreeableness	.07	.07	.04	.9	.36
	Conscientiousness	-.19	.07	-.11	-2.84	< .01
	Neuroticism	-.09	.06	-.06	-1.63	.10
	Openness	.37	.07	.2	4.93	< .001
	Commitment	.00	.01	-.00	-.08	.93
	Exploration	.00	.01	.02	.56	.58
	Age	-.01	.01	-.09	-2.53	<.05

Note: Adjusted R^2 = .05, F (8, 754) = 6.07, p < .001

Table 1.4b Standard multiple regression analysis to predict preference ratings for each music dimension, using the Big Five, identity dimensions and age as predictors (n=763).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*T*	*p*
Upbeat & Conventional	Extraversion	.14	.04	.13	3.34	< .01
	Agreeableness	.28	.05	.20	5.23	< .01
	Conscientiousness	.11	.05	.08	2.18	< .05
	Neuroticism	.14	.04	.13	3.34	< .01
	Openness	-.12	.06	-.08	-2.11	< .05
	Commitment	.00	.00	.01	.28	.78
	Exploration	.01	.00	.09	2.23	< .05
	Age	-.00	00	-.01	-.15	.88
Note: Adjusted R^2= .08, $F_{(8, 754)}$ = 8.08, p< .001						
Energetic & Rhythmic	Extraversion	.43	.06	.28	7.36	< .001
	Agreeableness	.27	.08	.14	3.61	< .001
	Conscientiousness	-.19	.07	-.10	-2.64	< .01
	Neuroticism	.01	.06	.01	.19	.85
	Openness	-.09	-.08	-.04	-1.10	.28
	Commitment	-.01	.01	-.09	-2.30	< .05
	Exploration	.00	.01	.02	.45	.66
	Age	-.01	.01	-.05	-1.30	.20
Note: Adjusted R^2= .1, $F_{(8, 754)}$ = 10.73, p< .001						

Table 1.5a Standard multiple regression analysis to predict preference ratings for each music dimension in the age group 17-24 years (n=578).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	β	t	P
Reflective and Complex	Extraversion	-.04	.04	-.04	-1.0	.34
	Agreeableness	.14	.05	.11	2.73	< .05
	Conscientiousness	-.18	.05	-.15	-3.52	< .05
	Neuroticism	.10	.04	.10	2.29	< .05
	Openness	.35	.06	.26	6.13	< .001
	Commitment	-.00	.00	-.11	-.31	.76
	Exploration	.01	.00	.11	2.63	< .01
	Age	.11	.02	.21	5.32	< .001
Note: Adjusted R^2= .19, F (8, 569) = 16.88, p< .001						
Intense & Rebellious	Extraversion	-.11	.06	-.07	-1.60	.12
	Agreeableness	.06	.08	.03	.70	.49
	Conscientiousness	-.22	.08	-.13	-2.83	< .01
	Neuroticism	-.07	.06	-.05	-1.02	.31
	Openness	.32	.09	.17	3.67	< .001
	Commitment	-.00	.01	-.01	-.19	.85
	Exploration	.01	.01	.07	1.49	.14
	Age	-.02	.03	-.02	-.52	.60
Note: Adjusted R^2= .06, F (8, 569) = 4.67, p< .001						

Table 1.5b Standard multiple regression analysis to predict preference ratings for each music dimension in the age group 17-24 years (n=578).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*t*	*P*
Upbeat & Conventional	Extraversion	.14	.05	.13	2.89	< .01
	Agreeableness	.25	.06	.18	4.09	< .001
	Conscientiousness	.09	.06	.07	1.60	.11
	Neuroticism	.17	.05	.16	3.59	< .001
	Openness	-.05	.07	-.03	-.68	.50
	Commitment	.00	.00	.04	.90	.37
	Exploration	.01	.01	.09	2.03	< .05
	Age	,03	,02	.05	1.23	.22
Note: Adjusted R^2= .08, $F (8, 569)$ = 6.23, p< .001						
Energetic & Rhythmic	Extraversion	.42	.07	.27	6.20	< .001
	Agreeableness	.31	.09	.15	3.53	< .001
	Conscientiousness	-.25	.08	-.13	-3.02	< .01
	Neuroticism	.03	.07	.02	.45	.65
	Openness	-.09	.09	-.04	-.91	.36
	Commitment	-.01	.01	-.06	-1.40	.16
	Exploration	.00	.01	-.02	-.33	.74
	Age	.05	.03	.06	1.35	.18
Note: Adjusted R^2= .10, $F (8, 69)$ = 7.69, p< .001						

Table 1.6a Standard multiple regression analysis to predict preference ratings for each music dimension in the age group 25-66 years (n=185).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Reflective and Complex	Extraversion	.01	.07	.01	.13	.89
	Agreeableness	.21	.09	.18	2.28	< .05
	Conscientiousness	.12	.09	.11	1.38	.17
	Neuroticism	.02	.08	.02	.29	.77
	Openness	.24	.09	.21	2.67	< .01
	Commitment	-.01	.01	-.08	-.93	.36
	Exploration	.00	.01	.04	.44	.66
	Age	.01	.01	.06	.84	.40
Note: Adjusted R^2= .08, F (8, 176) = 3.12, p< .01						
Intense & Rebellious	Extraversion	-.11	.12	-.08	-.91	.37
	Agreeableness	.09	.16	.05	.59	.55
	Conscientiousness	-.16	.15	-.09	-1.05	.30
	Neuroticism	-.21	.13	-.14	-1.63	.11
	Openness	.47	.15	.25	3.14	< .01
	Commitment	.00	.01	.00	.02	.99
	Exploration	-.01	.01	.08	-.94	.35
	Age	-.01	.01	.08	-1.04	.28
Note: Adjusted R^2= .03, F (8, 176) = 1.75, p> .05 (ns)						

Table 1.6b Standard multiple regression analysis to predict preference ratings for each music dimension in the age group 25-66 years (n=185).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Upbeat & Conventional	Extraversion	.17	.09	.15	1.89	.06
	Agreeableness	.38	.11	.26	3.37	<. 01
	Conscientiousness	.11	.11	.08	1.02	.31
	Neuroticism	.07	.10	.06	.74	.46
	Openness	-.33	.11	-.23	-3.01	<. 01
	Commitment	-.01	.01	-.10	-1.21	.23
	Exploration	.00	.01	.02	.22	.83
	Age	-.00	.01	-.04	-.59	.56

Note: Adjusted R^2= .10, $F (8, 176) = 3.57$, $p< .001$

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Energetic & Rhythmic	Extraversion	.51	.12	.33	4.19	<. 001
	Agreeableness	.16	.16	.08	1.06	.29
	Conscientiousness	-.04	.15	-.02	-.29	.78
	Neuroticism	.01	.13	.01	.09	.93
	Openness	-.11	.15	-.06	-.75	.45
	Commitment	-.02	.01	-.16	-1.93	.06
	Exploration	.01	.01	.08	.98	.33
	Age	-.02	.01	-.14	-1.87	.06

Note: Adjusted R^2= .11, $F (8, 176) = 3.82$, $p< .001$

Table 1.7a. Independent-samples t-tests for the 23 music genres between younger and older participants.

Music Dimension	Music Genres	Mean Scores Age 17-24 years Age 25-66 years	SD	t (df)	P (two tailed)	Partial Eta r
Reflective & Complex	Bluegrass	3.85 4.34	1.11 1.23	-4.66 (268)	< .001	.03
	Blues	4.74 5.10	1.30 1.42	-3.73 (757)	< .001	.13
	Classical	4.76 5.60	1.58 1.32	-8.0 (368)	< .001	.39
	Folk	4.32 4.90	1.62 1.51	-4.68 (325)	< .001	.25
	International Foreign	4.26 4.91	1.58 1.39	-5.43 (339)	< .001	.28
	Jazz	4.60 4.95	1.55 1.69	-2.54 (758)	> .05 ns	.10
	New Age	3.98 4.04	1.26 1.40	-.57 (279)	<.05	.03
	Opera	3.32 4.17	1.69 1.70	-6.10 (758)	< .001	.22
Intense & Rebellious	Alternative	5.47 5.07	1.44 1.61	2.95 (758)	> .05 ns	.10
	Heavy Metal	3.85 3.89	2.17 2.09	-.30 (755)	> .05 ns	.01
	Punk	4.59 4.38	1.72 1.69	1.40 (756)	> .05 ns	.01
	Rock	6.00 5.80	1.41 1.40	1.59 (757)	> .05 ns	.01

Table 1.7b Independent-samples t-tests for the 23 music genres between younger and older participants.

Music Dimension	Music Genres	Mean Scores Age 17-24 years Age 25-66 years	SD	t (df)	p (two tailed)	Partial Eta r
Upbeat & conventional	Country	4.11	1.61	.40	> .05 ns	.01
		4.05	1.72	(757)		
	Gospel	3.68	1.56	-2. 279	> .05 ns	.08
		3.98	1.52	(759)		
	Oldies	4.99	1.46	-.11	> .05 ns	.00
		5.00	1.37	(756)		
	Religious	2.81	1.66	-4.15	< .001	.15
		3.30	1.76	(757)		
	Soundtracks	5.55	1.28	3.64	> .05 ns	.13
	Theme music	5.14	1.39	(759)		
Energetic & Rhythmic	Dance &	4.75	1.80	2.54	> .05 ns	.10
	Electronica	4.36	1.82	(759)		
	Funk	4.06	1.43	-2.17	< .05	.13
		4.36	1.63	(277)		
	Rap	4.51	1.89	3.86	< .001	.14
	Hip Hop	3.89	1.84	(759)		
	Reggae	4.42	1.48	-1.29	> .05 ns	.05
		4.58	1.49	(758)		
	Soul	4.80	1.77	-.62	> .05 ns	.02
	R& B	4.90	1.61	(754)		

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